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NEA Today

A NEWSPAPER FOR MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. APRIL 1983 VOL. 1, NO. 6

**'Parents wonder why I moonlight,
but when we talk about my teacher
salary, it's not hard for them to
understand.'**



See story on page 4

PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

Incomparable Worth

The tone is cranky. The words crack with arrogant exasperation, subtle innuendoes, and not-so-subtle accusations: *What do your members really want? What's your Association after?*

I've listened to these questions. I've answered patiently. I'm tired of it.

But I'll answer again. The answer isn't new. And it certainly isn't complex.

We want a society free of malice. We want the triumph of goodwill and compassion over mean-spiritedness and revenge. We want better schools, more international understanding, and less militarism. We want the U.S. Constitution to be more than a promise. We want our society to become all that it is capable of becoming.

And we want teachers and other school employees to have a position of dignity within our society. We want our members to receive the respect they de-

serve and the compensation they have been denied for so long.

These goals underscore our commitment to quality education, our expanding political agenda, and our advocacy on behalf of school workers. We are direct heirs to the struggles of the human family for freedom, equality, and equity.

Yes, improved wages are part of what we seek. Today, every paycheck tells teachers that they are not valued. Every budget cut tells them that their contribution to the nation's welfare remains unrecognized. Every RIF notice tells them that they're not worth much to the society they selflessly serve. They hear the disdain.

And they hear those who argue that teachers work short hours for only 180 days and so are more than adequately compensated.

Enough of such transparent sophistry. The average teacher arrives at school before 8 a.m. Classes—interrupted (on good



NEA President
Willard McGuire

days) by a lunch break of 30 minutes or less—run until 3 p.m. Then there are after-school tasks: committee meetings, paperwork, supervision of extra-curricular activities.

Evenings bring no relief. They're the time for grading papers and preparing lesson plans. The 12-hour workday is not uncommon.

But (the critics retort) there

are those glorious work-free summers. Sure. Teachers typically spend those summers upgrading their skills through both informal study and formal course work (which they pay for themselves). More than 50 percent of public school teachers now hold master's degrees. They didn't get them by spending their summers sunbathing.

For these hours and this dedication, for work that ensures the health of our democracy and the security of our future, for their endurance of increased responsibility and decreased resources, teachers average an estimated \$20,531 annually. Half of them make less—often far less.

In almost a third of the states—16 to be exact—the salary average is below \$18,000. In six states, it hovers around \$15,000. And these averages include the salaries of tens of thousands of teachers who have given their entire adult lives to the cause of public education.

To members of many other professions who give 20 or more years of service, we often grant commendations and special priv-

ileges. To those who serve our nation in the classroom for more than a quarter century, we give little. Sometimes nothing. Sometimes scorn.

Beginning teachers receive no better treatment. Their average starting salary nationwide is well below \$14,000. For many others who work so hard to make the public schools succeed—the custodians and bus drivers, secretaries and cafeteria workers—the salary picture is even bleaker. Incredible as it may seem, there are in our country today school support workers making less than the minimum wage.

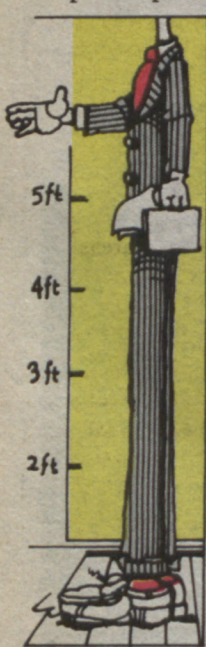
So what do we want? The question borders on an insult. We want justice. Just a little. We want compensation that reflects how much we have given to so many for so long. And we're going to get it.

We'll get it because the public is finally beginning to grasp what we have long understood: dedicated school workers deserve the support—psychological and financial—of the nation to whose children they dedicate their lives.

TRENDS

Equal Heights Amendment?

Short? Overweight? Both? If so, drop those plans for becoming a



high school principal. Either that, or be prepared to fight against the results of a recent "Height Report."

Carl A. Bonuso used his doctoral dissertation research at Hofstra University to verify his hunch that other factors being equal, school superintendents would rate tall, slim would-be administrators much higher than their shorter, not-so-slim peers. In his tightly controlled study, Bonuso found solid and disturbing evidence of "body type bias."

Bonuso attributes this bias to

society's "ideal image of a leader"—an image that's threatening to reach the height of absurdity.

The Bucks Start Here

The almighty dollar has become a bit mightier: this year's college freshmen list financial comfort as their main reason for wandering through the groves of academe, according to a new survey—*The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 1982*.

The survey, conducted annually for the past 17 years by UCLA researchers, shows 25 percent more freshmen listing financial success as a "very important" career goal than did in 1967. And the study reveals a "continuing pattern of increasing materialism and declining altruism."

Consistent with this pattern, an alarmingly low percentage of freshmen—4.7 percent—list teaching as a career choice (down from 21.7 percent in 1966).

Evidently, today's frosh know what they want—and know where it isn't.

Make Your Own Coffee, Please

The shortage is critical. Job vacancies remain unfilled for months. And average annual openings are expected to jump from the current 295,000 to 600,000 by 1990. A national task force is studying the problem.

Math teachers? Scientists? Engineers? No—secretaries. The U.S. Department of Labor reports more job openings for secretaries than for any other single occupation.

Unfilled vacancies may in part be the result of the extent to which secretaries continue to be treated as "gofers" and second-class employees. But there are signs of progress. The National Task Force on the Image of the Secretary reports businesses and industries

are at least beginning to recognize the role of secretaries in enhancing productivity.

The task force is also urging educators to help inform students—both male and female—of the new opportunities in the secretarial field. And they're pressing management to begin adequately compensating secretaries. About time.

The Discipline Diet

The average American adolescent consumes 836 cans of soda each year. Most survive, at least temporarily, with few side effects more serious than hefty dental bills.

By contrast, a recent study conducted at Germany's University of Mainz found that delinquent and behaviorally disoriented children gulped down between 1,200 and 1,500 cans a year of sugar-soaked and carbohydrate-laden soft drinks.

Is there a connection? Most research suggests a resounding yes.



Recent reports by the American Psychological Association show that among the most severe delinquents, dietary modification (mainly less sugar) may result in as much as an 80 percent decline in disciplinary infractions.



Muted Militarism

"War is inevitable and a reasonable way of solving conflicts."

That's one conclusion you'd reach by reading 11 of the history textbooks most widely used in this country, according to Sergio Herscovici of the City University of New York and Sharon Wigutoff, an authority on sexism and racism in children's books.

Their survey—documented in their book *Militarism in Textbooks*—concludes that school texts are "soft on war."

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AROUND THE NATION

What the Numbers Tell Us About Tomorrow's Schools

You don't have to be a fortune-teller to know that we as a nation are changing and regrouping in ways that will have vast effects on tomorrow's schools.

A number of demographic "surprises" occurred in the 1970s—enough to confound census experts and fortune-tellers alike.

In keeping with our need to stay abreast of these trends, in the box elsewhere on this page we highlight some of the surprises reported, and predictions offered, by researchers across the country.

New voices are adding weight to NEA's warnings that there could very well be a general teacher shortage in the late 1980s. A summary of new studies on the topic produced by the Illinois Association of School Boards, for example, predicts that the shortage will be as severe as that of the 1950s and 1960s.

In one of the studies, Louisiana State University researchers say that many education graduates will continue to go into higher paying fields—and that a continuing need to reduce the teacher-pupil ratio will further drain the supply of teachers.

Another study contends that teacher training institutions have declined too rapidly in production of teachers. A projection from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) shows the current annual crop of 154,000 new teacher graduates growing only to 187,000 by 1987, while new teacher openings will rise from 124,000 in 1982 to 192,000 in 1987.

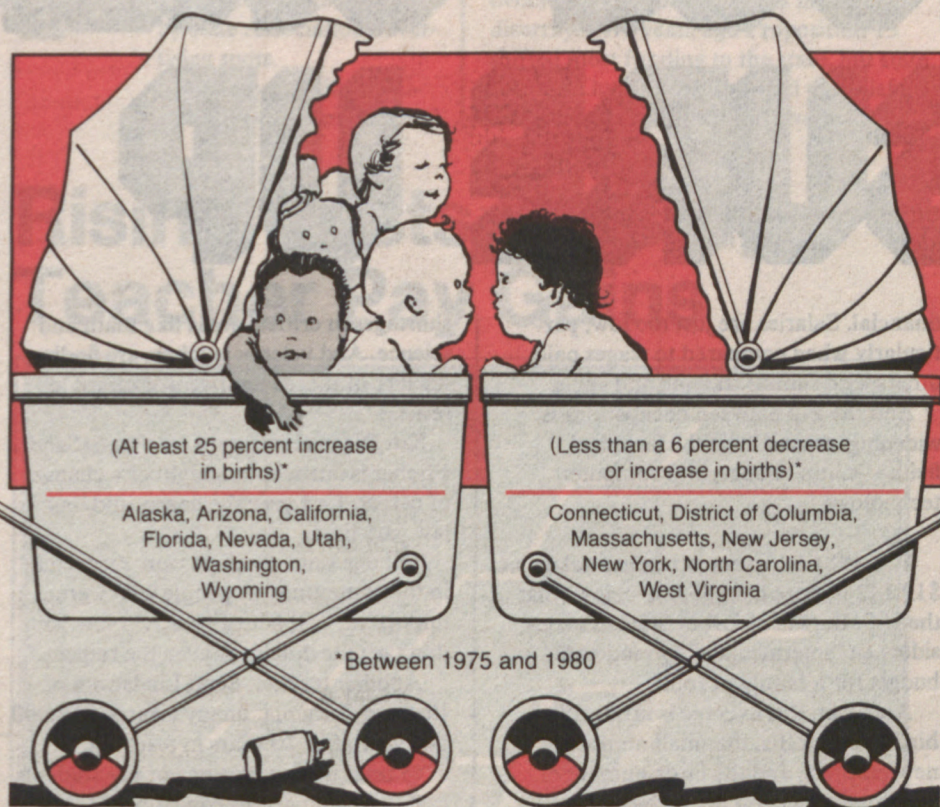
The predicted shortfall is already a fact in many districts. Teacher supply-and-demand expert William Graybeal of NEA Research notes, "We began seeing spot shortages of teachers in math, industrial arts, and science about a year ago. Now we're getting a fairly steady flow of reports that teaching jobs are plentiful in these fields."

Los Angeles, for instance, needs nearly 5,000 full-time and substitute teachers—partly as a result of teacher resignations following passage of California's Proposition 13 in 1978. And New York City and Baltimore report a desperate need for English, math, and science teachers.

Because of lower birthrates in recent years, there are 6 million fewer public school students than there were 10 years ago—and almost 3,500 fewer school buildings, according to NCES. School boards have been closing schools as enrollments declined.

Most of the buildings taken out of service so far have been elementary schools. But in the 1980s the impact of the enrollment drop is expected to fall much more heavily on high schools.

The annual number of births decreased each year between 1961 and 1974, except for a moderate increase between 1969 and 1971. Birth rates have remained relatively low since 1974, but 1980 and 1981 saw a "mini baby boom" of sorts. The number of births during the 12 months ending with November 1982



Big Gainers

(3.7 million) was up by 44,000 over the previous 12-month period.

Partly as a result of long-delayed childbearing among post-World-War-II "baby boom" women now in their 30s, the number of births is expected to increase each year until 1988—but at a lower rate than that observed in 1980 and 1981.

These national population trends will probably not be observed exactly in any one state, school system, or higher education institution. The picture varies from state to state, reflecting regional differences in birth rates as well as a continuation of the migration from the Frostbelt to the Sunbelt.

While the Northeast, North Central, Southeast, and South Central states will

Losers & Slight Gainers

all experience declines in the number of high school graduates between 1979 and 1994, Western states will see an increase—thanks to a higher birth rate since 1973 and recent heavy migration into the region.

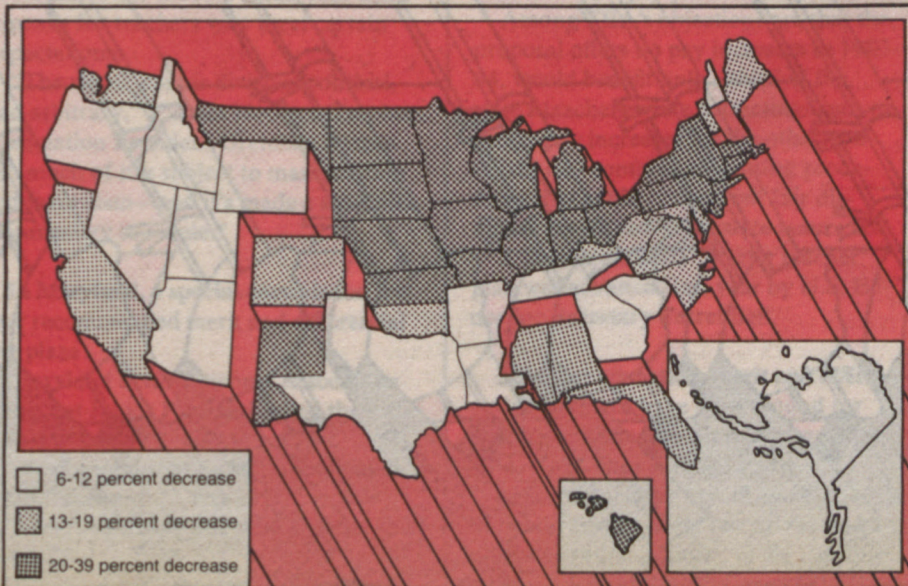
In 1995, nine of the 13 Western states are projected to have numbers of high school graduates equal to or exceeding their 1979 totals. In Utah and Wyoming, the jump will be as much as 50 percent.

Nationwide, two curriculum areas expected to continue to gain students in the 1980s, according to NCES, are adult education and occupational education, as the greatly expanded adult population in a "graying America" creates new demands for continuing education.

—Vicky Lytle

18-Year-Olds Grow Scarcer

The number of high school graduates will bottom out across the country between 1984 and 1987, then slowly start to rise again. Between 1979 and the low point, the drop will be from 6 to 39 percent, depending on state.



Today... And the Future

► The actual number of births in the U.S. during the 1970s fell 17 percent below a 1970 Census Bureau projection. Despite the large number of American women of childbearing age, the birth rate did not begin robust growth until 1981. The delay has been attributed to the trend toward later marriages and later motherhood, as well as an increase in abortions.

Prediction: As many as 25 percent of American women now in their twenties may remain childless for life.

► Immigration of illegal aliens and refugees has become a surprisingly significant factor in U.S. population growth. Nearly one-third of the 2.3 million increase in U.S. population in 1981 resulted from net legal immigration. Illegal immigration accounts for some half a million people each year.

Prediction: Illegal immigration will continue and increase in the 1980s, and the proportion of public school students from minority and foreign origins will continue to rise. If teachers are to have the time they need for individualized attention to these students, smaller class sizes will be needed.

► Migration to the Sunbelt has been much greater than expected. The South and West now have growing populations, while New England, the Middle Atlantic, and the East North Central regions do not.

Prediction: Migration of young families with school-age children to the Sunbelt will continue—but not as rapidly as during the 1970s. Growth in the West will be stymied by diminishing water supplies, but not until after the 1980s.

► America's traditional pattern of rural to urban migration has been reversed. Small towns and rural areas grew at a faster rate than cities during the 1970s. More than five million Americans moved to rural areas between 1970 and 1980.

Prediction: The migration to rural areas will continue unless there's a change in current attitudes favoring the quality of life in small towns.

► Life expectancy increased by almost three and a half years between 1970 and 1980—three years more than predicted.

Prediction: Life expectancy for U.S. males will finally exceed 70 years, rising from 69.5 in 1978 to 71.9 in 1990. Female life expectancy will reach 80 years by 1990 (compared with 77.2 years in 1978). The nation's median age, now around 30, will be 36 by the year 2000.

► The number of U.S. children under age 18 living with just one parent increased from 8.2 million to 12.6 million between 1970 and 1981. By 1981, about one in five children (20.1 percent) lived with one parent—almost twice the 1970 proportion.

Prediction: Children from single-parent homes will become increasingly visible in the schools. Some observers feel such children have special needs that call for greater individualized attention from teachers.

'Parents wonder why I moonlight...' **SCHOOL SALARIES MEASURE UP**

For most of the faculty at Largo (Maryland) Senior High, the work-day is over.

But not for James Brown (cover), a work study coordinator in vocational development. He's on his way to Rosecroft Raceway for his three-hours-a-night shift as a cashier and usher.

For James Brown and thousands of other teachers and support staff across the country, moonlighting means the extra income they need to survive. But often the price is high—less time with families, less patience with students and colleagues, overall a little less enthusiasm for their work, knowing that at the end of the school day there are still another three or four hours to put in at a second job.

No one can say exactly how many school staff moonlight, but studies show they make up a very high percentage of the 5 million Americans who work two jobs.

The Texas State Teachers Association recently sponsored a survey of some 500 of its members. Nearly 30 percent said they moonlighted, averaging about 12 extra hours a week—and a little over \$3,100 a year in extra pay. Predictably, 75 percent of those polled said they would prefer to quit their part-time jobs.

Moonlighting and working in education seem to go together. The reason is

financial. Salaries are just too low, particularly when compared to wages paid others with similar training and skills.

And the gap between occupations is widening, especially in the technical fields—math, science, and computer technology.

The 1981-82 average teacher salary of \$19,142 is more than \$6,000 below what the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics considers an "intermediate" or moderate budget for a family of four.

And even this average is artificially high due to RIFs, the small number of new teachers, and the large number of veteran teachers on the high end of salary scales.

What's more, even though teachers' salaries have risen nearly 40 percent over the past five years, the cost of food, clothing, transportation, and other items has increased by 60 percent.

And what about new education graduates? What can they expect to find? According to NEA Research, beginning teachers made an average salary of \$12,769 in 1981-82. That's about \$10,000 below what a new engineer made, \$3,500 below a business administration graduate, and \$7,500 below a new computer science employee.

As a result, fewer college students are entering the teaching profession—creating

shortages in critical areas like math and science. And veteran teachers are finding the lure of more lucrative work hard to resist.

San Diego elementary teacher SaSandra Fischer is one who's thought of a change of career. Last year she began studying law part-time.

"At one time, teachers were respected in the community as people who were important," explains Fischer. "Now you don't get the dollars or even the respect."

Another teacher, Scott Lindstrom of Bedford, Virginia, finally cleared \$14,000 last year after 10 years in teaching.

"I tried to convince one of my students that he should get his education," Lindstrom recalls. "He said, 'Why? Look where you are.'"

Boosting salaries and fringe benefits has never been easy, but the task seems particularly difficult these days, with several prominent obstacles in the way.

They include depressed state and local revenues (43 of 50 states faced budget deficits entering 1983), lack of collective bargaining rights in many states, declining enrollments, and an Administration in Washington bent on diminishing federal aid to education.

In bargaining and nonbargaining states alike, school boards are citing these factors as reasons to offer meager wage in-



Bedford, Virginia, teacher Scott Lindstrom finally cleared \$14,000 last year, after 10 years in the profession.



California elementary teacher SaSandra Fischer is one of the many teachers now considering a career change. She's begun studying law part time.

creases (if any) and to roll back other hard-won gains as well.

All this requires a counteroffensive—a national, state, and local Association partnership on many fronts.

That effort is under way.

NEA has stepped up its campaign to persuade Congress not to buy the Administration's attempts to reduce the federal government's role in public education. Association lobbyists and grassroots congressional contact teams are defending programs that work against new regulations that distort their intended purpose—and enlisting the public to come forward in support of its schools.

On the state and local levels, NEA affiliates are scrutinizing school district and state budgets, bargaining tough, and lobbying those who hold the purse strings.

It may be weeks or months before members can judge the effectiveness of this effort, but here's how the battles shape up right now on the national front and in selected states around the nation.

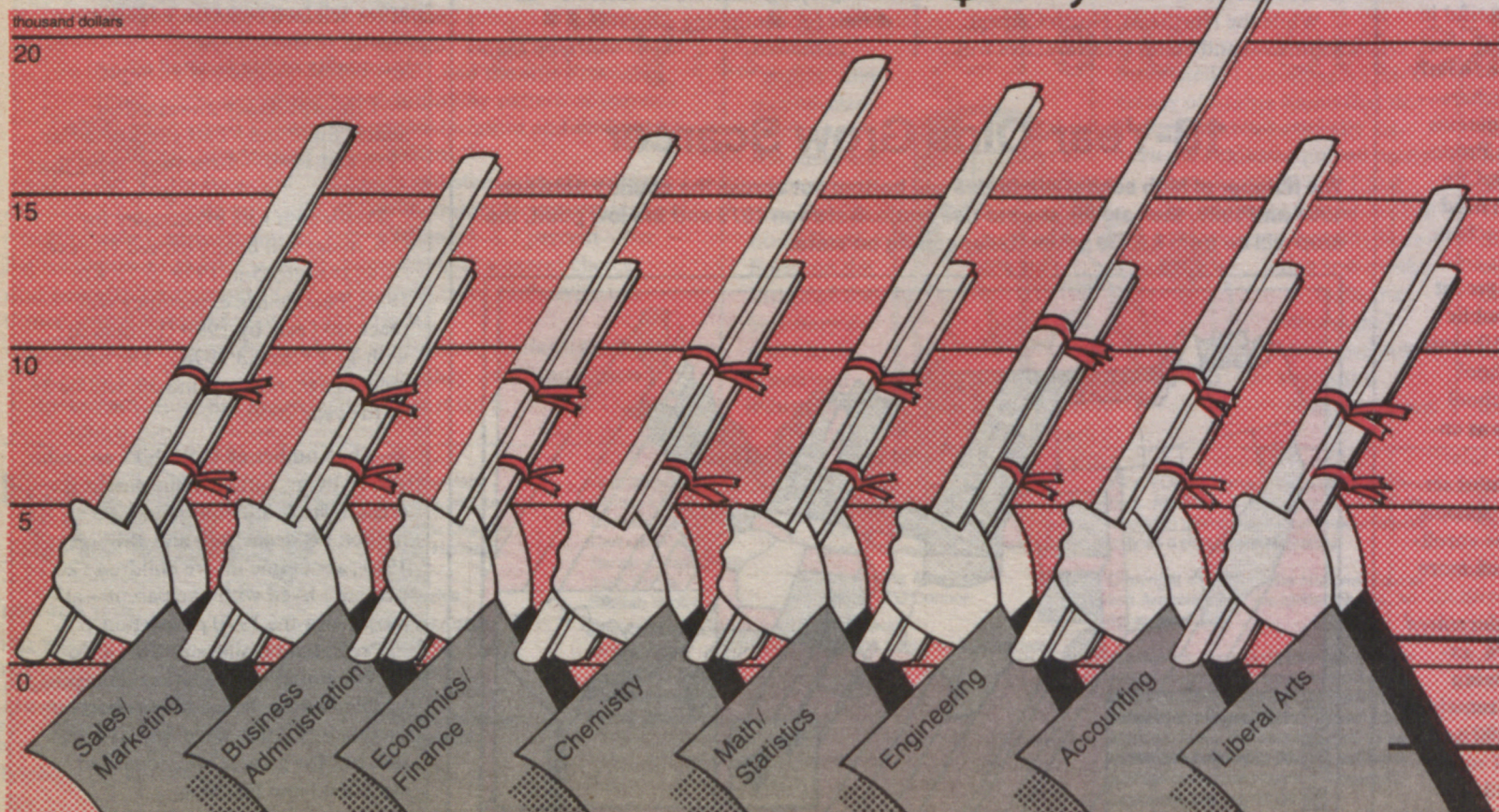
- Each year of the Reagan presidency, the Administration has proposed less for public education. Fiscal 1984 is no different. The President wants \$2 billion less than present levels of federal aid—a cut that would force states to pick up an even greater share of education costs, while all but a few are already in the red thanks to the recession.

In one of its few new ideas for education, the Administration's latest budget requests only an additional \$1 a year for

Average Starting Salaries, 1981-82:

- Public School Teachers (Bachelor's Degree)
- Other College Graduates

Wanted: Great Teachers at \$12,769



DON'T

technical training for each of the nation's 41 million public school students.

NEA proposes spending about \$100 per student under the American Defense Education Act (ADEA).

If passed, ADEA would provide some \$2 billion in its first year to help schools improve critical education programs in science, math, guidance and counseling, foreign languages, and the new technology. At least a portion of that money could be used to retrain teachers now in other fields to teach math and science.

- NEA is also out front on what could become the issue of the decade—pay equity, or equal pay for work of equal or comparable worth.

Education is particularly ripe for the pay equity revolution. As NEA Secretary-Treasurer Mary Hatwood Futrell noted in testimony before three subcommittees of the House of Representatives, "teachers are often low paid, because the majority are women." This discrimination won't end, she said, "until we look at jobs in terms of their requirements, skills, and true value without regard to the person's sex, race, or physical ability."

- Whether teachers' salaries are dramatically improved of course depends a great deal on public perceptions. And here NEA, through its national TV advertising campaign and its theme "A Strong America Needs Strong Public Schools," is attempting to move the public toward

greater support of public education. The national effort, which ran for seven weeks in major media markets last fall and will run again this year, is supplemented in many areas by state Association advertising spots.

- State and local affiliates in both bargaining and

nonbargaining states are putting special emphasis on increasing the state share of education funding, as taxpayers resist higher local taxes.

In California, a \$1-billion-plus budget deficit has left public schools in financial disarray. Five years ago Proposition 13 shifted most funding to the state, but state surpluses have dried up—and that's left many local contracts unresolved and

teacher salaries frozen.

The California Teachers Association has called for adequate, equitable, and effective financial support for the public schools.

Minnesota Education Association (MEA) members have just begun to bargain on new contracts. A two-year-old state law mandates two-year contracts for all public employees and also permits strikes.

Teacher salaries rose an average of 12 percent under the last two-year contract. MEA is shooting for a salary of \$19,000 for beginning teachers.

In Pennsylvania, where a teacher makes an estimated average salary of \$21,000, Pennsylvania State Education Association members are fighting an uphill battle for more state aid.

Four years ago, the state was chipping in 46 percent of education funds; it's now 40 percent. Over the past two years, average salaries have increased 19 percent.

In Michigan, where teachers average an estimated \$24,000 a year, the Michigan Education Association is continuing to press the state to assume its share of education finance. By law, state and local governments are supposed to share these costs equally, but last year the state contributed just 37 percent of the total. Michigan teachers gained a 7 percent pay hike last year.

In West Virginia, Association members—who have gone two years without a pay raise—have made higher salaries one of their two top goals.

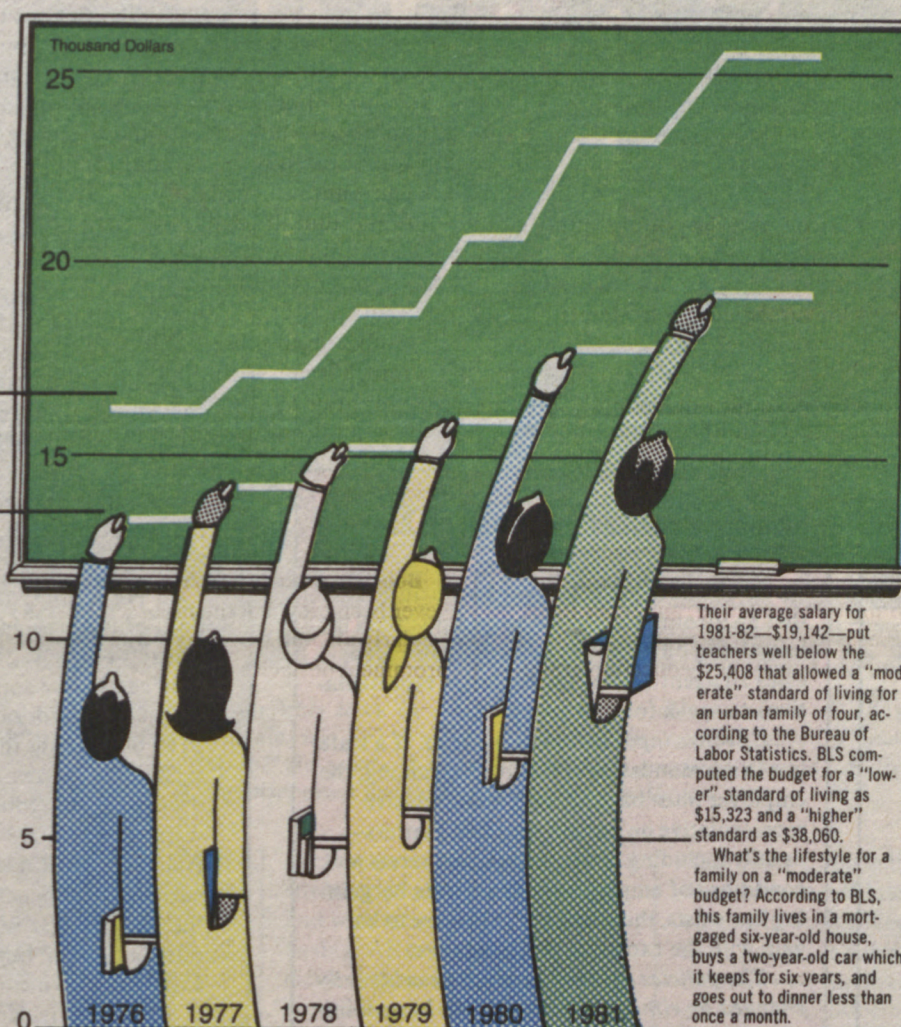
"I refuse to be browbeaten on the salary issue," says West Virginia Education Association President Lowell Johnson. "Our members need and deserve a decent raise."

Moonlighting Maryland teacher James Brown agrees.

"Sometimes I meet parents of my students at the racetrack," says the 23-year teaching veteran. "They seem surprised I'm working there. But when we talk about my salary and teaching responsibilities, it's not hard for them to understand."

—Bill Fischer

Rising Costs Outstrip Teacher Pay Gains



Gimmicks No Cure for Salary Ills

The twin issues of rewarding a district's "best" teachers and raising the salaries of those whose skills are in highest demand confront Association members nationwide.

Most "merit" plans are touted as encouraging teaching excellence, while "differential pay" plans are designed to address shortages in certain disciplines—chiefly math and science.

NEA objects to such plans because they fail to address the problem of salary levels that are far below those of other professions requiring comparable skills and training.

Additionally, merit and differential pay plans are often implemented without consulting the Association, are often subject to the whims of administrators, include questionable criteria for judging teaching excellence, and often cause serious morale problems among teachers or college faculty.

The Houston (Texas) school district's Second Mile Plan is a good example of a

pay incentive scheme with laudable intentions but less than desirable results.

The plan includes salary incentives of \$2,000 for math, science, and special education teachers and those who teach in certain lower-income areas, plus extra stipends for teachers who meet certain expectations.

"The whole plan is divisive, political, and arbitrary," charges Houston Teachers Association President Gretchen Barnes. "So much of it is subject to manipulation and favoritism—and it's made a shambles of our salary schedule."

In Maryland, a special commission last year recommended merit and differential pay plans.

Maryland State Teachers Association President Janice Piccinini called the proposals unfair and "discriminatory."

"There should be equal pay for equal work," she said. "There's no objective criteria for determining who is better than whom."

In Tennessee, Governor Lamar Alex-

ander recently unveiled a ten-point "master teacher plan."

Though Tennessee Education Association (TEA) members support parts of the plan, the Association is not happy with the merit pay portion.

Among TEA's objections are that the proposal offers no pay increases in 1983-84, would benefit only a third of the state's teachers while detracting from future pay increases for the other two-thirds, and contains relicensing procedures that could circumvent fair dismissal provisions of the state tenure law.

A similar national "master teacher" plan was advanced last year by U.S. Education Secretary Terrel Bell.

In higher education, merit and differential pay plans have been around for years, and some new plans are touching off controversies among faculty.

In California, the new chancellor of the state university system recently issued an executive order authorizing his 19 campus presidents to set differential pay

scales for selected business, engineering, and health sciences faculty.

That order immediately prompted an unfair labor practice charge from the Congress of Faculty Association (CFA), an NEA affiliate that was recently certified the bargaining agent for 19,000 CSU faculty (story on page 7).

"We were never consulted," says CFA President Bill Crist, "and our own plan was ignored. We're not opposed philosophically to differential pay, but even our own plan was hotly debated. It was not an easy decision."

The University of Hawaii's "market pay" plan, announced last year, would integrate all salary schedules into one with 70 steps. Faculty would be placed on that schedule according to market demand for their particular discipline, with periodic reviews.

It's likely the merit and differential pay issue will be around a while, as teacher shortages worsen in certain fields.

What's less certain, however, is whether any of the current pay incentive plans really meets the need for more teachers in certain disciplines or serves as an incentive for good teaching.

—Bill Fischer

YOU AND THE LAW

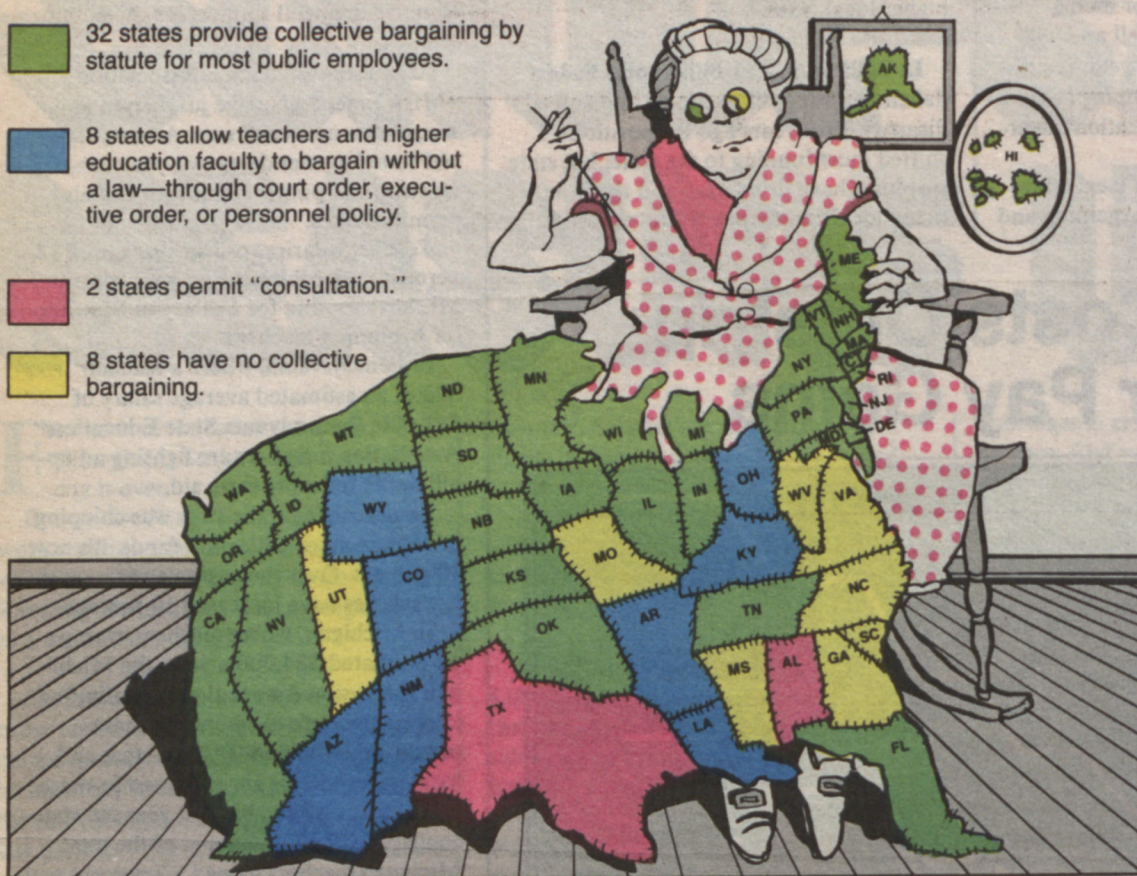
State Bargaining Laws: A 'Crazy Quilt'

32 states provide collective bargaining by statute for most public employees.

8 states allow teachers and higher education faculty to bargain without a law—through court order, executive order, or personnel policy.

2 states permit "consultation."

8 states have no collective bargaining.



For over 40 years, public employees have been excluded from the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA)—the federal law that permits private sector workers to engage in collective bargaining with their employers over hours, wages, and working conditions.

Instead, public employee bargaining is governed by a patchwork quilt of widely varying state laws.

Only 32 states have laws providing for collective bargaining by school and college employees. Wisconsin was the first state to enact such a law. That was in 1959. The last state to enact a bargaining law was Illinois, in 1981.

In eight states where there's no statute, strong local Associations have managed to institute collective bargaining with their school boards or college administrations anyway. In these states—Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Kentucky, Louisiana, New Mexico, Ohio, and Wyoming—the absence of a legal framework tends to exacerbate conflict over procedural matters.

Two states—Texas and Alabama—permit "consultation" on matters of concern to education employees, but no real bargaining.

In the remaining eight states, teachers, higher education faculty, and classified school employees have yet to gain even the minimal, legal right to "meet-and-confer."

Enactment of a federal collective bargaining law for all public employees—or inclusion of public employees under the NLRA—remains one of NEA's top legislative goals. Prospects look dim, however, in the present Congress.

—Sheilah Vance

Bargaining Means...

... *A collective voice for employees.* It means that an identifiable employee group (called the bargaining unit) selects by democratic processes an agent (called the exclusive representative) to speak for that group.

... *Effective input on school policies.* If a state law exists mandating collective bargaining, the employer *must* bargain with that exclusive representative on certain specified matters—usually including hours, wages, and terms and conditions of employment. If no state bargaining law exists, the employer can *agree* to bargain with the exclusive representative.

... *The policies agreed to cannot be arbitrarily changed by either party.* Out of the bargaining arises a contract—called a collective bargaining agreement—on matters mutually agreed to. The contract cannot be unilaterally changed by either party for its term (usually one to three years).

... *Due process for employees whose rights are violated.* If the employer violates the agreement by denying rights guaranteed by the contract, the employees can litigate such a violation in court or, as happens most often, before a mutually selected neutral third party through a process provided for in the collective agreement.

—NEA Organizational Development

Laws vary on how to resolve Bargaining Impasses

Once two parties at the bargaining table reach impasse, there are three basic procedures available for resolving the dispute: mediation, fact-finding, and interest arbitration.

Depending on the provisions of state law, one or more of

these procedures may be voluntary or required.

In *mediation*, a third party agreeable to both sides assists the union and the employer in coming to an agreement.

In *fact-finding*, an independent third party agreed to by both

sides holds a hearing and makes nonbinding recommendations for resolving the dispute.

In *binding interest arbitration*, the parties agree (or are required by law) to accept the decision of a third party.

When all else fails, teachers and most other public employees have the right to withhold services (go on strike) in seven states: Hawaii, Minnesota, Montana, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Wisconsin.

—Sheilah Vance

WASHINGTON WATCH

NEA President Willard McGuire (below, right) joined Sen. Gary Hart (D-Colo.) at a late February news conference on Capitol Hill, where Hart announced his reintroduction of the American Defense Education Act (ADEA) in the Senate.

"It is in our country's best interest to invest in the minds of young people," Hart told reporters. "The opportunities for jobs, for growth, for prosperity in the 1980's and 1990's depend on our human resources even more than our physical resources."

McGuire added that the NEA-backed bill (S 553), modeled on the landmark 1958 National Defense

Education Act, would provide local districts with incentives and resources to improve their own education programs in areas of critical national need.

The House version of ADEA had already been reintroduced by Rep. Carl Perkins (D-Ky.) as HR 881.



Joe Di Dio

Meanwhile, the annual fight over the federal budget is on once again. The Administration is calling for further cuts in aid to public education and other domestic programs, along with huge new expenditures for defense. In testimony before a House Budget Committee Task Force on Education and Employment, NEA asked for a fiscal 1984 budget resolution of over \$21 billion for the Department of Education. (The Reagan budget seeks \$13 billion.) NEA's figure is based on an estimate of what it would cost to maintain federal education programs at 1980 levels. At stake is funding for compensatory education, Indian education, impact aid, bilingual education, and other key programs.

NEA supports with some reluctance the recommendations of the National Commission on Social Security Reform. The reform package—endorsed by the Democratic and Republican House and Senate leadership as well as the White House—calls for savings and new revenues amounting to \$169 billion over the next seven years.

Should Congress deviate from the package—making more drastic benefit reductions, sharper tax increases, or other unwarranted changes—NEA will withdraw its support. The Association will also press Congress to restore the Social Security student benefit program—now being phased out under the 1981 Budget Reconciliation Act—to repeal the spousal offset and begin implementing an earnings-sharing program to help reduce inequities in Social Security benefits for women.

At press time, House and Senate committees were still drafting their respective bills.

President Reagan, attempting to appease his disenchanted constituency, has once again proposed a **tuition tax credit** plan. This one would be phased in over a three-year period beginning this year and would allow parents tax credits for 50 percent of a child's private school tuition—up to a maximum of \$300 in 1985. NEA opposes the plan.

A related Administration proposal—**vouchers** for parents of disadvantaged children—appears to be a last-minute add-on to the federal budget. Under this plan, funds from the biggest federal school aid program—Chapter 1—would no longer go directly to school districts. Rather, low-income parents would get negotiable certificates to use to enroll their children in the school of their choice—public or private. Schools would exchange these vouchers for federal funds. NEA will work to defeat any such "voucherization" of Chapter 1.

Educators will have a say in how job training funds get distributed under CETA's replacement, the **Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA)** of 1982, thanks to lobbying efforts by NEA and other education groups. The Act encourages school districts and community colleges to submit proposals detailing job training programs for the disadvantaged and the unemployed—including youth aged 16 to 21. Between now and JTPA's October 1 start-up date, state and local Associations should stay in close touch with governors' and mayors' offices as they make key decisions about implementation.

State Side

PACIFIC

An NEA affiliate has won the long battle for the right to represent more than 19,000 faculty members in the 19-campus California State University system.

The final choice of bargaining agents was a year in the making. A February 1982 vote resulted in a run-off election last May. This second vote was so close that the outcome hinged on some 500 challenged ballots, which were about evenly split between the Congress of Faculty Associations (CFA—the NEA/California Teachers Association affiliate) and the United Professors of California (UPC—an American Federation of Teachers affiliate).

In February, bowing to faculty pressure to end the delay, UPC withdrew its challenges, allowing a final tally. The official count showed 6,580 votes for CFA and 6,541 for UPC.

"We gave strong support to CFA because we believe it can deliver for the faculty at the bargaining table," says CTA president Marilyn Russell Bittle.

CFA, which is also affiliated with the American Association of University Professors and the California State Employees Association, has begun preparing to negotiate its first contract.

Comments NEA President Willard McGuire, "This victory in the nation's largest university system establishes NEA as the preeminent faculty organization in higher education."

NORTHEAST

A reconstituted grassroots network flexed its lobbying muscle this winter in Maine to negate the effects of a tax indexing referendum that would have sliced millions of dollars from state school subsidies.

Wearing bright yellow "Repeal" buttons, teachers from across the state spearheaded a drive to remove the retroactive clause from the tax indexing measure that Maine voters approved last November.

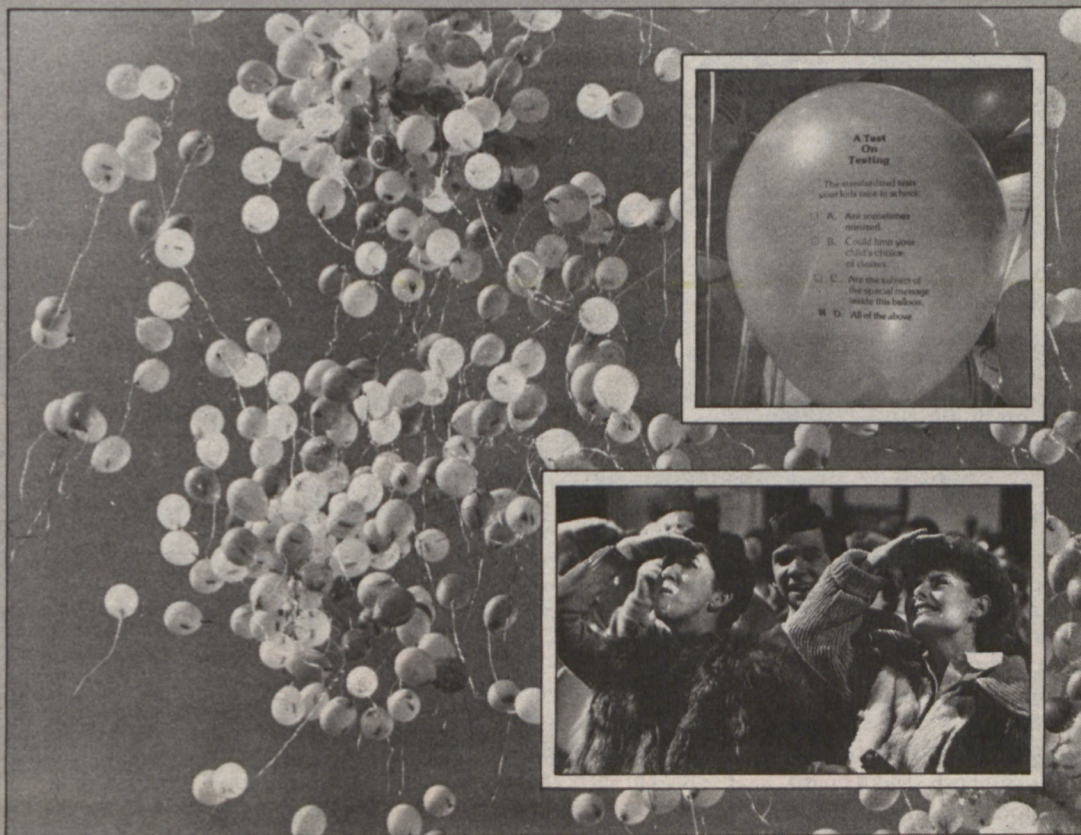
The message got through. Legislators were soon sporting the yellow buttons—and voting to enact a retroactive surtax that would give back the \$12.6 million lost to schools through the tax indexing scheme.

Modeled after systems in place in New Hampshire and Michigan, the lobbying network enlists teachers to make points with their hometown legislators—whom they often know on a first-name basis.

Reports Maine Teachers Association Communications Director Keith Harvie, "The network

UP, UP AND AWAY IN ARKANSAS...

AEA Lets the Hot Air Out of Testing



"The standardized tests your kids take in school (a) are sometimes misused, (b) could limit your child's choice of classes, (c) are the subject of the special message inside this balloon, (d) all of the above." So reads the multiple choice question that AEA dispatched recently via balloon. IPD conference participants watch as balloons soar.

When members of the Arkansas Education Association (AEA) make up their minds to get a message to the public, they don't stop with the normal communications media—and they don't stop at state borders.

They scored their latest publicity coup during an NEA regional Instruction and Professional Development conference on testing, held at a Little Rock hotel.

Already fed up with admin-

istrative pressure to raise student test scores at any cost and with other abuses of state testing, AEA members decided to get out the Association's views on the issue via a news conference.

All major Little Rock newspapers, TV stations, and radio stations covered the event, reports AEA President Lyle French.

At the conclusion of the news conference, AEA had local high school students re-

lease some 1,000 helium-filled balloons. Printed on the outside of each balloon was a testing quiz for parents. On the inside was an invitation to get additional information on standardized tests by writing to AEA.

"We're going to give a \$25 prize to the person who returns a request from the farthest away," French says. "At last count, 10 requests from outside the state had come in—one from Chicago!"

is fantastic. It really works—and teachers are turned on by it."

OVERSEAS

NEA's Overseas Education Association (OEA) is stepping up efforts to tell its far-flung members the facts about their pending 1984 transfer from one federal agency to another.

OEA charges Assistant Defense Secretary Lawrence J. Korb, who now heads America's overseas dependent schools system, with using "scare tactics" in an effort to reverse the scheduled transfer of the schools from the Department of Defense to the Education Department.

Korb has been putting out the word that if the 270 overseas

schools come under ED rather than DOD control, teachers will lose many benefits they now have (use of military commissary, exchange, hospital, and recreation facilities) and will forfeit their current protection under the Status of Forces Agreements with foreign governments regarding tax and customs requirements.

Korb also contends that logistical support to overseas schools will suffer and that DOD personnel policies and practices that now benefit teachers will be lost in the move to ED.

The Association has strongly supported the transfer to an agency that will give higher priority to education needs. OEA President Jack Rollins sent a

memo this winter to the 6,000 overseas teachers OEA represents, countering each of Korb's claims and pledging that under no circumstances will OEA or NEA permit transfer of the schools without the assurance that teachers will be fully protected.

MIDWEST

The Michigan Education Association offers support to its many laid-off members through continued insurance coverage and a job search program.

For the first few months, the Michigan Education Special Services Association (MESSA)—MEA's affiliated insurance service—picks up the cost of the

health care plan a RIF'd employee had at the time of layoff. (Costs range from \$61 to \$240 monthly.) Even after the free coverage period runs out, pink-slipped members still qualify for MEA's group rates.

To help displaced members relocate, MEA offers career planning workshops, publicizes teacher and school support staff openings as they come up, and issues a special "Job Search" newsletter for RIF'd members.

WEST

Arizona legislators have introduced several anti-teacher bills this session, apparently in retaliation for the Arizona Education Association's political activism in last November's elections.

They include proposals to cut off automatic salary deductions for dues, bar teachers from serving in the legislature, and abolish tenure.

Meanwhile AEA has also been battling to keep a scheduled 7 percent increase in state aid to schools for 1983-84. Governor Bruce Babbitt has proposed cutting it to 4 percent.

AEA has countered with a "Stand Up for Schools" campaign—inundating legislators with letters, postcards, and mailgrams from thousands of teachers, school support staff, parents, and other concerned citizens.

"We think the public agrees with us that while there is a budget deficit, it is unreasonable to emasculate our children's education," explains AEA President Dennis Van Roekel. "And we don't think reasonable people will countenance punitive legislation aimed at teachers for exercising our rights to free speech and advocacy in the political arena."

MID-ATLANTIC

The Ohio Education Association has begun helping its local affiliates publish informational pamphlets for parents.

Popular topics so far include Halloween safety tips, parent-teacher conferences, hints for helping with homework, and advice about drug and alcohol abuse.

OEA furnishes hassle-free "repro" sheets that the local Association public relations committee can take to any printer and run off inexpensively, including a local credit line like this one:

"Issued as a community service by your child's teacher and the Columbus Education Association/OEA/NEA... people who care about your kids!"

Local Look

WASHINGTON

Patient building of community support climaxed by a one-day strike has brought a contract victory to Steilacoom teachers.

The school board had refused to agree on any contract item until the Steilacoom Education Association gave up its right to bargain the school calendar. Instead, after the teachers struck January 20, the board found itself in an all-night bargaining session that left the SEA satisfied with the resolution of all 17 items at issue.

Why did the board suddenly listen to reason? Months of talking with parents about school issues paid off for teachers when 350 parents marched on the board meeting January 20. The parents didn't get in—but the board settled down to serious bargaining.

"Our biggest win is that we now have a school board that's willing to listen to teachers," reports SEA president Frank Calsbeek. Other gains include the right to pool fringe benefits, a 50 percent hike in substitute teachers' pay, and improvements in various kinds of leave.

MISSOURI

When a flood closed Valley Park schools and destroyed homes and businesses late last year, the elementary and junior high buildings suffered almost total loss of books, materials, and equipment. Some high school materials were also destroyed.

Valley Park-NEA members, with students and the community, worked for two weeks in a monumental cleanup effort to get the schools open again.

Meanwhile, Missouri-NEA affiliates in the St. Louis area raised funds and contributed materials and textbooks to help replace the many personal materials teachers lost in the flood.

COLORADO

The Littleton Education Association (LEA) is back in business with a new master agreement—for the first time since 1974.

Littleton, in suburban Denver, was one of the first Colorado locals to enter into collective bargaining, more than a decade ago. But soon after resolution of a strike and ratification of a master contract in early 1974, the school board tried to impose individual contracts again.

LEA, backed by the Colorado Education Association and NEA, filed a suit that resulted in a landmark 1976 decision in which the

PENNSYLVANIA STRIKE SETTLED AFTER 82 DAYS

Teachers Educate a Stubborn Board



Teachers and friends maintain an all-night vigil as California (Penn.) Area Education Association President Gerald Cowen spends his first night in jail. (Inset) Cowen tells supporters, "I know we will continue to act as one until we get a contract."

Association members in the town of California, Pennsylvania, 30 miles south of Pittsburgh, taught their stubborn school board a lesson this winter in the state's longest-ever teacher strike: teachers will go to jail if necessary to protect their rights.

The 82-day strike by the 76 members of the California Area Education Association (CAEA) began last September after contract negotiations broke down.

"The board wanted to strip our contract of 82 items that had been in place for up to 12 years," reports Gerald Cowen, CAEA president, "and offer nothing in return."

Teacher strikes are legal in Pennsylvania, but judges can still order teachers back to work if they feel the "health, safety, and welfare" of the community are endangered.

Teachers, in good faith, went back to work on December 9 under court-ordered marathon bargaining. But the school board refused to budge, negotiations broke down once more, and the Association resumed the

strike on December 20.

A county judge, after finding CAEA in contempt of his two back-to-work orders, decided in early January to send President Cowen to jail nightly from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. until the strike ended, and to fine teachers a day's pay for each day they stayed out.

This move triggered nationwide media coverage—and reinforcements. Some 2,500 supporters—Association members from neighboring towns, sympathetic parents and other citizens, and representatives of mine and steel unions—stood in subfreezing weather to cheer high school computer science teacher Cowen as he entered jail on the first night. Some maintained an all-night vigil.

Wearing a hat that read, "I'm Union—Damn Proud of It," Cowen said, "I'm just standing up for what I believe is the proper thing to do."

The Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board (PLRB) appointed a factfinder whose report CAEA accepted. But the school board refused to accept the factfinder's recommendation that striking teach-

ers be given amnesty.

CAEA filed an unfair labor practice suit. The PLRB expedited matters by appointing the original factfinder as a conciliator.

CAEA—still holding its ground—and the board finally hammered out their differences in a late January weekend session, and the district's 1,400 students returned to classes.

For CAEA, the long strike brought good returns:

- Raises of \$1,600, \$1,700 and \$1,800 for three consecutive years, with a wage reopener in the fourth year.

- A pledge that any reductions in force during the first two years of the four-year contract will be handled through attrition only.

- Amnesty for all teachers for violation of the court injunction and participation in the strike.

"Teachers all over Pennsylvania are sending money to help members make up for the lost benefits and wages," Cowen says. "This show of unity helped us carry on the fight."

MINNESOTA

Association members in St. Cloud and Burnsville—districts facing serious financial prob-

lems—are determined to protect student programs and save teachers' jobs.

The St. Cloud Education Association, meeting with its school board, stressed the need to retain valuable programs such as student assistance, preschool, and elementary after-school athletics. The Association recommended cuts in nonacademic areas, such as administrative travel, and use

of the district's general revenue fund.

The Burnsville Education Association's suggestions to its board were similar to SCEA's. Then BEA went public, sending copies of its proposals to over 700 community members and offering to meet with individuals or small groups to explain the ideas.

"Financial integrity must not be achieved at the expense of educational cuts when any other viable areas for cuts exist," says Don Bowyer, BEA president. "Our goal is to make the district consider creative funding."

GEORGIA

A newly appointed school superintendent in Richmond County (Augusta) thought he would solve the school board's financial crisis by making teachers the scapegoat. But a Richmond County Association of Educators show of force impressed the board much more.

School officials had announced in February that the school system was almost \$7 million in the red. The superintendent's solution: make immediate massive cuts in teaching positions and reduce salaries for the remaining teachers.

But some 250 RCAE members joined others from the community at a school board meeting where they strongly suggested that the board consider other alternatives.

The board, sensing that teacher cuts would be unpopular throughout the county, altered its plan. The board will now borrow money if necessary, cut all travel, and consider instituting a four-day work week.

It won't cut teaching positions or salaries this year.

WISCONSIN

What do you do when you get threatening letters from your doctor, telling you to pay your overdue bill? Members of the Fond du Lac Education Association filed a grievance against their school district.

Annoyed at being suddenly confronted with bills for medical care that their insurance carrier previously had paid, teachers charged the school board with unilaterally reducing the health insurance coverage provided in their master contract.

The Association was able to mediate a settlement with both the school board and the insurance carrier, satisfactorily resolving each individual case and gaining direct access to the insurance company employee who handles teachers' claims.

Meet:

Frances Byrd



Michigan's capital city has been hard hit by auto industry layoffs. How does a 17 percent unemployment rate affect a city's students? Are they being prepared to meet the new challenges of a high technology society?

NEA Communications staff writer Marian Clayton visited Lansing high school counselor and Association member Frances Byrd to find answers—and made a discovery on arrival.

"Here's Everett High," the cab driver said, "the home of 'Magic' Johnson." Inside, basketball players were sporting "I Believe in Magic" shirts.

The conversation couldn't stay away from sports for long because Byrd—a 15-year veteran at Everett—counseled LA Lakers superstar Earvin Johnson.

You were a nurse before you became a teacher. Why did you change careers?

I still work in hospitals during the summer, but teaching was just something else I wanted to do. I taught special ed for three years, then settled on counseling. I've been here ever since.

Have any of your nursing experiences helped you as a counselor?

My public health nursing helped more than my work in hospitals. Seeing children in their homes helped me better understand many of their frustrations.

What sort of homes do most of your students come from?

Everett is a real cross-section of the city. We have the sons and daughters of blue-collar auto workers, auto executives, state government employees. . . . About 20 percent are minorities.

What are your main responsibilities as a counselor?

I spend at least 50 percent of my time helping students select classes that match their career goals, make college or vocation choices, prepare for tests, look at various scholarships and grants, and write resumes.

Most of this is done in groups. I use the rest of my time in individual counseling.

Suppose a sophomore says he plans to go to work after high school, and you develop a schedule that reflects his choice. Then in the middle of his junior year, he decides to go to college. Will he have had enough college-oriented courses to make the change?

That's a common occurrence. Many students change their minds as late as 12th grade. That's why we stress math, science, and English—courses that

will give them a good background, no matter what field they pursue.

Is Everett's curriculum equipped to help students meet the high technology demands of today's job market?

We have an excellent program. Classes range from basic math to calculus, from general science to physics. We offer Spanish and German, and the system provides a common center for all area high schools where other languages are taught.

The dilemma—except for very bright students—is in getting them to enroll beyond what's required. The trend now is to shy away from what's "hard."

Since you can't force students to take the more challenging courses, what do you do to stimulate their interest?

We have special sessions on career opportunities, study skills, test-taking skills. We bring in representatives from various colleges and industries to talk about what they expect of high school grads.

College grant and loan money is drying up, and unemployment is rampant. How does this bleak picture affect students?

Some work harder than ever, so as to graduate with the best possible skills. I tell them to arm themselves with something that someone wants, take the "hard" courses, look everywhere for scholarships, and look at what

junior colleges offer.

And other students?

Some aren't able to tough it out. I have a student in 11th grade with emotional problems. He lives with his mother, who is unemployed, and his sister. Right now they're living on his sister's salary from a part-time job, and he just can't concentrate on his studies. He feels that even with a good educational background, his job opportunities would be no better than they are now.

What do you think will happen to him?

If he gets a job, he'll drop out of school. Maybe one day he'll come back, but right now, school is just another hassle.

Are drug and alcohol abuse a problem here?

Alcohol is more prevalent than drugs. A growing problem is students with alcoholic parents. One girl was upset just yesterday. She was about to take an exam, but her father had been drunk and abusive the night before. She and her mother had to sleep with their clothes on for fear they would have to leave home in the middle of the night.

Were you able to help?

I got the exam postponed. To get at the root of the problem, we'll need the help of outside agencies.

Do you encounter many cases of teenage pregnancy?

Quite a few. Many girls transfer to a special school where they maintain their classes, take courses in child care, and get pre- and postnatal care.

Does the system offer any courses for teenage fathers?

No, and that's too bad because they need help. When I was a nurse, I sometimes saw young men come in to see their babies. They were so excited about being fathers, without realizing what that meant or without any interest in accepting the responsibility.

Has the herpes scare cut down on teenage promiscuity?

I hear kids talking about it, but it's always in jest, or it's always someone else.

I know it's impossible to keep every student you counsel on the right track. But when do you feel you've done a good job?

At graduation. Just watching kids I've known for three years march across that stage is a big thrill.

After graduation my students and I often vacation together at my home on the lake. We just enjoy each other after three years of ups and downs. During this time, I learn a lot about what influence I've had on them, and I use this knowledge with those still in school.

Do your perceptions usually agree with the new graduates?

Not all the time. But I visit for-

mer students in college and those who are working. After being outside a while, they realize the need for good skills and don't mind thanking me for persuading them to stay in this course or that.

They might give an incentive to students still in school.

Former students are our best push for educational excellence. They come back and talk about what their peers need to hear—the difficult transition to college, what happens if you don't study, the advantages of various colleges. I can talk about the same things, but kids listen to kids.

Everett has a famous graduate whom I understand you counseled. Does he visit?

Earvin is here frequently. When he comes, he's like the Pied Piper of Hamelin, and he has such a nice manner with kids.

We're proud of what he's doing for kids here. He sponsors sports teams around the city—and last year gave five scholarships to outstanding minority students.

Was it difficult for Earvin to concentrate on his studies amid all the media hype about his basketball talent?

Earvin is a well-rounded person. He was able to take care of his schoolwork, serve as editor of the school newspaper, and play ball.

But sports did interfere at times. College and pro scouts were here to see him every day.

So you agree with the critics who say high schools place too much emphasis on sports?

Some of the criticism is valid, but colleges and society in general are equally to blame.

I encourage Everett's gifted students to pursue their talents—whether in academics, sports, or the arts. But I tell them to be prepared to choose an alternate field.

Not everyone makes the pros. . . . That's right, or even gets a scholarship.

Are most of your athletes good students?

Many do well in their classes but they don't test well. I feel strongly that colleges should put more emphasis on a student's high school record than on his or her test score. Unfortunately, they don't.

Do you have children in college?

My youngest daughter is in college. My son and the two older girls are grown up. And, since you asked, I'll tell you of my greatest accomplishment. As of last night, I'm a grandmother. My daughter had a baby girl!

Elwood Lendis

HUMAN RIGHTS

Busing Challenges Rebuffed—Twice

In separate cases, the U.S. Supreme Court and the East Baton Rouge Parish (La.) school board have stymied Reagan Administration plans to invalidate court-ordered school busing plans.

The Court unanimously refused to hear arguments against a federal appeals court decision upholding Nashville, Tennessee's current busing plan. In *Metropolitan County Board of Education v. Kelley*, the appeals court had ruled that school officials are legally bound to try every necessary measure—including busing—to attain "the greatest degree of actual desegregation."

The Justice Department aligned itself with the anti-busing forces. In a friend-of-the-court brief, it urged the Supreme Court to end any busing that has what the Department termed "unacceptable educational, social, and economic costs." (Although more than half of U.S. students ride buses to school, only 7 percent of them are bused for the purpose of integration.) The brief also asked the Court to give more "guidance" to lower federal courts.

In the East Baton Rouge case, the school board by a 10-to-2 vote blocked a Justice Department proposal to end mandatory busing. The plan involved establishment of magnet schools and of new boundaries for school attendance districts. U.S. Assistant Attorney General William Bradford Reynolds announced that because of the school board's opposition the Justice Department would no longer seek any change in the mandatory busing order, which has been in effect since 1981.

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights had warned that the Justice Department's stance in the Nashville case would "reopen old wounds" in communities that have successfully complied with constitutional commands.

"The issue of busing for the purpose of school desegregation," said the Commission, "was resolved by the Supreme Court of the United States more than a decade ago. The debate should end."

The Justice Department, however, is reportedly still considering requests to challenge busing orders in Boston, Cleveland, Detroit, St. Louis, and Memphis.

"Opponents of busing," the Commission charged, "fail to consider the real issue, namely, the constitutional mandate to eliminate—by whatever means necessary—segregated public schools."

By their recent actions, the Supreme Court and the East Baton Rouge Parish school board have refused to betray that mandate. They may also have taught the Justice Department something about true justice.

Hard Times Bring Renewed Bigotry

Hatred of those who look different (or think differently) has too often been a human response to economic hard times. So the recent surge in acts of bigotry—from painting racist slogans and swastikas on walls to assaulting and even murdering Blacks, Jews, Vietnamese, and

others—comes as no surprise. But it can be stopped.

"We have presently at our disposal the necessary [statutory] means to bring a halt to the growing number of acts of racially motivated violence," U.S. Civil Rights Commission member Mary Berry told a congressional subcommittee recently. "We have no choice but to make swift use of these means."

The Civil Rights Commission's position appears in a new booklet, *Intimidation and Violence: Racial and Religious Bigotry in America*. Relatively few of those who commit acts of bigotry belong to organized hate groups like the Ku Klux Klan, the Commission explains.

When the public fails to condemn such acts and prosecute those responsible for them, both organized groups and growing numbers of individuals will dare to commit further outrages.

Statements by the media and by government and community leaders, from the President to parents, are a first step in stopping acts of bigotry, says the report. The Commission also strongly recommends that teams of law officers who deal with such terrorism be representative in race and religion of the communities they serve.

Many of the people who attack those of another race or religion, the Commission points out, believe they are defending

Americanism. They resent government efforts to equalize opportunity for all. Only when they see that most Americans have a very different idea of Americanism—an idea that rests on democracy and diversity—will they restrain themselves from acts of terror.

The booklet's chapter "Promising Responses" gives favorable notice to the teaching guide on the Ku Klux Klan developed in 1981 by the NEA, the Connecticut Education Association, and the Council on Interracial Books for Children. The guide is available (stock no. 1419-7-00-D) from the NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516, for \$4.95, with a discount on orders of 10 or more.

CPT explains what happens after your administration office buys a word processor.

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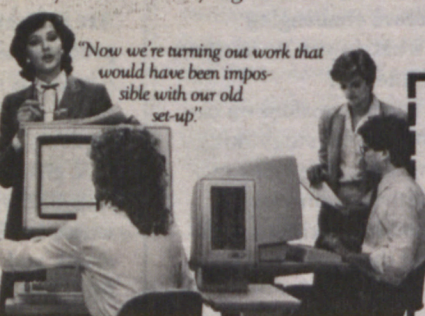
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IN THE CLASSROOM

Daryl started high school with a burst of enthusiasm. He told his parents, "I'm really going to work for better grades. No more D's and F's."

Through September Daryl did well in all his classes. He handed in his assignments and even got B's on a couple of tests. "High school's easy," he thought.

But in October the pace started to pick up, and when he tried to do his written homework, Daryl always seemed to get stuck. He'd think about it for a minute, then a familiar feeling of futility would sweep over him: "What's the use?" In the end, he'd go downstairs to find something else to do—something that would take his mind off school.

This scenario is all too familiar to teachers. Some students begin the year in the glow of renewed hope, only to see that hope extinguished by tests, quizzes, and assignments they think they

fifth graders with solvable problems, while a "failure" experimenter presented them with mostly unsolvable ones.

Many students quickly learned to fail to solve any problem the "failure" experimenter gave them. When that researcher eventually presented them with two solvable problems almost identical to problems the "success" experimenter had given them earlier, some students took much longer to solve these problems or failed to solve them at all.

The experimenters ranked all the students according to how well they matched their earlier performance on the second try. They characterized the most successful half of the group as *persistent*, the least successful as *helpless*.

by Christopher Johnson

Children Who Learn Not To Learn

can't handle. Nothing succeeds like success, but nothing fails like failure either. It feeds on itself, making the youngster feel too stupid ever to succeed.

Why does the feeling of failure seem to snowball until it overwhelms the student—even the gifted student? Why does a failure kill all motivation in one child, but make another work harder than ever?

Such were the questions that psychologists asked themselves when, over 10 years ago, they started looking closely at academic failure.

The central insight to emerge from their research is that many students who appear to be lazy or apathetic are actually the victims of *learned helplessness*. The term comes from the work of psychologists Carol Dweck of the University of Illinois and N. Dickson Reppucci of the University of Virginia. In a 1973 article, they defined *learned helplessness* as the conviction that effort is unrelated to achievement. People who have learned to be helpless, they said, are convinced that what they do has no effect upon what happens to them.

Learned helplessness can have serious effects in the classroom. According to Karen Stephen, a psychologist in Oak Park, Illinois, "Children who have learned to be helpless see absolutely no way out of their problems. From their failures, they learn to be depressed, and they become unable to function in the classroom."

NEA member Marilyn Koch, who teaches first and second grades in Evanston, Illinois, points out one consequence: "Because these children don't think they can function academically, they have a difficult time staying task-oriented." Often teachers find that because they can't assert themselves academically, these students assert themselves through negative behavior.

To learn more about the differences between children who become helpless in the face of failure and those who persist, researchers have compared the two groups' personality characteristics. In one experiment, designed by Dweck and Reppucci, a "success" experimenter presented 40

What made the helpless children give up the second time? To find out, Dweck and Reppucci compared the scores of children in both groups (obtained before the experiment) on a scale that measures the degree of responsibility one feels for good and bad events in life. It also measures whether one attributes success and failure to effort or to ability.

They reached two conclusions. First, they discovered that the helpless children were in general "externals"—they believed that things happened to them as the result of external forces such as luck, the difficulty of the task, and the attitude of the teacher. Believing they could not control such forces, the children gave up when they encountered obstacles.

Second, the researchers learned that these children also attributed failure to a factor inside themselves: lack of *ability*. The persistent youngsters, on the other hand, cited *effort* as the key factor in their success or failure.

Effort and ability differ in one important way: you can change the amount of effort you put into a task, but you can't change the amount of innate ability you have. People who believe they lack ability believe also that effort would be useless.

Given these findings, Carol Dweck saw that any program for motivating children who had learned helplessness would have to accomplish two goals. First, it would have to train the child to attribute failure to lack of effort rather than lack of ability. Second, it would have to help the child take responsibility for failure and so would have to make failure less menacing.

To meet these goals, Dweck developed a method of changing motivation that she calls *attribution retraining*. Every day for 25 days, two experimenters under her direction took six children who had learned helplessness and led them through an assortment of math problems. The problems included a few beyond each student's level. When a child was unable to complete a problem in the time allowed, the researcher said, "Stop, time is up! You didn't finish. . . . That means you should have tried harder." The experimenter delivered this cue in a clear, direct—but nonpunitive—tone.

The simple message worked. At the end of the 25 days, the students took a test containing occasional problems beyond their level. Even after an encounter with a problem they couldn't solve, they persisted. Some of the children actually worked longer on the problems that followed those they could not solve. Three of the children, after failing to solve



What Teachers Can Do

Learned helplessness is a complex phenomenon that researchers are only beginning to understand. Even so, teachers can take several steps to combat it in the classroom.

1. *Help students view mistakes as part of learning.* Class discussion can build a constructive attitude toward failure. What do students think it means to fail? How do people react to failure? How does failure in a subject make students feel about that subject? What can people learn from failure?

2. *Focus students' attention on effort rather than ability.* Teachers can do this

by saying things like, "You got the problem wrong, but it looked as if you were trying. If you put in a little more effort, you may get the answer right next time." The word *may* helps children develop the realistic attitude that success is not guaranteed.

3. *Teach children to try alternative problem-solving strategies.* Researchers have found that children who have learned to be helpless persist with problem-solving strategies that clearly are not working. Consequently, it's crucial to train these students to recognize ineffective strategies and try alternatives.

problems, said out loud that they must not have tried hard enough. All of them had broken the pattern of helplessness and found a new response to failure.

Students who have learned they are *not* helpless can learn also to take their failures in stride, steering a middle course between giving up and blaming themselves too severely.

Teachers must make sure, however, that such students have a chance to learn the skills new problems will require. Otherwise their newly found persistence will quickly wear itself out on doomed attempts.

Christopher Johnson, a former high school English teacher in Downers Grove, Illinois, is a free-lance writer in Framingham, Massachusetts.

IN THE CLASSROOM

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(ALSO KNOWN AS KEEPING STUDENTS' EYES ON THE BALL, NOSES TO

"Time on task" is the newly fashionable, but always sensible, notion that the amount of time students spend doing schoolwork—in contrast to "moving, waiting, or getting organized"—relates to how much they learn.

Researchers in both the U.S. and England, working to establish the crucial variables that link time and academic achievement, have investigated three kinds of "time": the total time students spend in school, the number of minutes they spend on a subject in a week, and the number of years they must study a subject.

Teachers have a say about only the second of these dimensions of time. So NEA Today asked four Association members to comment on how they keep students actually studying their subjects.

Their responses suggest first that "time on task" is nothing new. These teachers have been focusing their students' attention on learning for years. A second conclusion is that time on task cannot mean the same thing in all subjects or at all levels.

Third, these teachers are clearly not slaves to fashion. So when outsiders, including education researchers, advocate new "methods," they know how to separate slogan from substance. Consequently, there's no voodoo pedagogy here—just thoughtful teaching at its best.

COLORADO's LAUREL BENSON

'Zap 'em before roll call.'



TICK

In an elementary school, teachers can lose more class time first

thing in the morning than at any other time. Children straggle in full of conversation, dawdle over hanging up their coats, slip out for a drink of water. And teachers must take the roll and the lunch count, collect homework, and proclaim a variety of announcements.

For years, I proceeded as if this confusion and wasted time were inevitable. But deep down I suspected they weren't. After sporadic attempts, two years ago I came up with a start-the-day routine that has expanded the time my fifth graders spend on task.

The first activity of the day, every day, is a Brain-Waker-Upper. This is a problem students know they have to start the minute they get to their seats, because there is a time limit on how long they can work on it—usually 15 minutes. There's also a biweekly prize (a school pencil maybe) for the person with the most correct Waker-Upper answers.

These incentives get students into their seats and on task very quickly. While they work, I take roll and lunch count. I delay announcements until the end of the



Joel Radtke

activity, when all are attentive and I don't need to repeat information.

The Waker-Uppers vary from day to day. I give exercises on skills such as following directions, using an encyclopedia, or recognizing synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms. Or I may write words on the chalkboard (perhaps state names) for students to list alphabetically. Every Monday I put a new and useful word on the board that students are to define and use in a sentence.

All the activities have educational value, but the game format makes them fun. And many involve practice in skills that may be hard to fit in at any other time during the day. What's more, the variety of tasks allows students at all academic levels to grow and at the same time to have frequent success.

Waking up students' brains first thing in the morning makes them ready and willing to get into more substantive areas later in the day.

Laurel Benson teaches fifth grade at Mary Blair Elementary School, Loveland, Colorado.

MASSACHUSETTS' ANNE VILLALON SPEYER

'Now and then take the road not taken.'



TICK

My class is discussing Reginald Rose's play *Twelve Angry Men*. I ask if a juror can be both logical and emotional. Someone asks me if I saw *CHiPs* last night.

We are working on clauses. One sample sentence is about cars. A student asks if I know how much a driver's license costs.

I am reading aloud from Act III of *Romeo and Juliet*, where Juliet's father threatens to disown her unless she marries Paris. A girl breaks in angrily, "What business is it of her father's?"

We often interpret such questions as insidious attempts to undermine our work. But that isn't always the case.

In fact, a student's question may be on target, but we may be too annoyed at the "interruption" to notice. Or the question may be a student's way of asking for attention. In a world where people simply change TV channels if their expectations aren't immediately met, we should not be surprised if our students demand more from us than a lesson plan.

Ideally, we should be able to detect the merely nonsensical interruptions and brush them aside. (If we offer to discuss extraneous topics after class, for example, the prankster's interest in them usually disappears.) We should also be aware that diversions sometimes hide real teaching possibilities.

To find out, we have to take at least a short detour off the track we've laid out. I did that with these three students, and this is what happened.

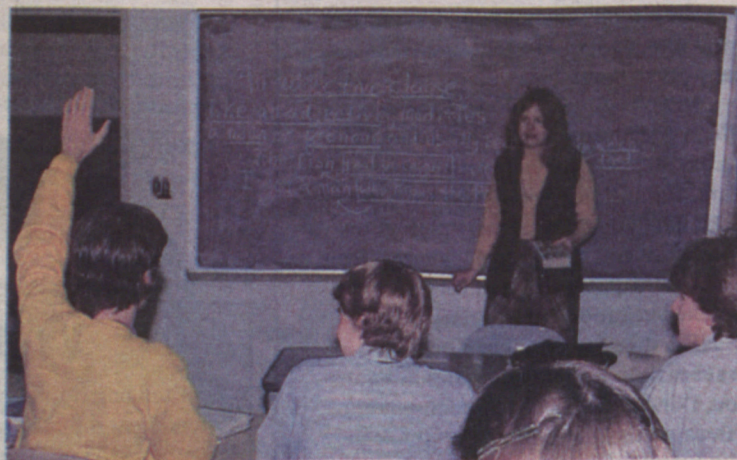
The *CHiPs* fan described an episode in which a police officer had to choose between his job and a law-breaking friend. The officer's compromise is analogous to the approach of a juror in the play who tried to blend reason and compassion. Because the student was able to make his point, he left class that

day with a connection he would remember—and the triumph of having helped the teacher make her point.

To the driver-to-be I explained that I had a responsibility to finish the lesson. I offered, however, to phone the motor vehicle office for him—even though he could have made the call himself. Our society offers young people few constructive rites of passage. So when one of those rare official ceremonies does come along, why shouldn't a youngster expect his teacher to share the excitement?

Until *Romeo and Juliet* triggered her outburst about marriage, my young woman student had always been sullen. Consequently, I welcomed the angry response. I knew that she was 14, that she battled with her parents, and that she saw marriage as a way to get away from home. So I used her interruption to examine ways that a modern young woman can achieve independence.

At the time, I was about to get married myself. I was glad to share my comfortable feeling, at 32, of having stayed single long enough to have established a solid identity. I described how satisfying it was to feel that I had earned the free-



Tom Bleezard

dom to make that decision for myself.

We must be flexible about "detours." To be suspicious, to refuse automatically to take them will impede our ability to function as educators. Detours always lead somewhere, often where we wanted to go in the first place—or sometimes to another destination more meaningful for our students.

Anne Villalon Speyer teaches English at Mount Greylock Regional High School, Williamstown, Massachusetts.

IN THE CLASSROOM



THE GRINDSTONE, SHOULDERS TO THE WHEEL — YOU GET THE PICTURE.)

CALIFORNIA'S FRANCES SPIELBERG

'Make sure the task's worth doing.'

 In math it's hard to stray from the lesson of the day. You can't sing holiday songs in the language of algebra, and the interesting applications of geometry to football formations don't come up until long after football season is over. So my students and I always spend time "on task." The real teaching challenge is to give them a task worth staying on.

Last summer at an institute for science and math teachers at California State University at Fullerton, I learned that keeping kids busy isn't always the same as helping them learn to think.

The instructor reported that many of the college students he teaches can't do simple applied problems. That reminded me of the old saying "When I hear, I forget; when I see, I remember; when I do, I learn." His students apparently had seen little and done less.

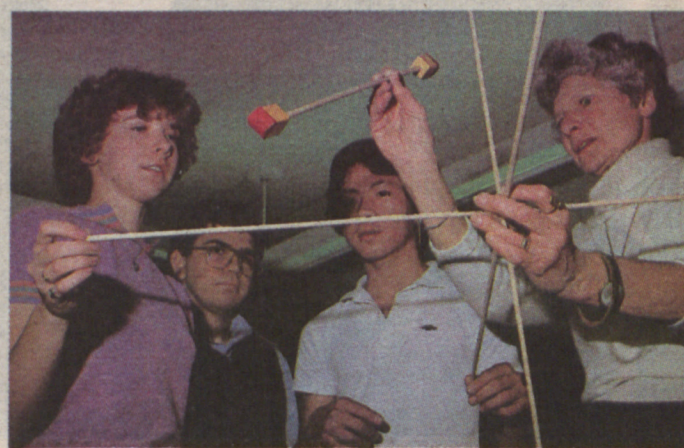
To help students see and do, the instructor urged us to let students experiment and explore ideas for themselves.

"Don't cover material," he advised, "uncover it."

His idea was that a teacher's chief task is to set the stage for meaningful discovery. Teachers should get students to think out loud, toss around wild ideas, even pool their ignorance. When they try, sift, discard, they develop logical thought processes.

So I am making a conscious effort to be a stage setter.

I have always presented new problems and theorems at the board, one step at a time, with students providing the successive steps and reasons. Now I'm



Harry Watson

encouraging them to brainstorm.

- I've always had students put homework problems on the board, offering as bait extra points. Now I get several students to put up their solutions to the same problem, even solutions with errors. Then I ask the class to think about what went wrong and ways to correct it. Debugging and correcting become essential to the problem-solving process.

- I look for new materials for modeling concepts—any tool that helps students consider the properties of geometric figures. Fluorescent light bulbs can represent parallel or perpendicular lines; desks and walls, parallel or intersecting planes. Everyone spends class time making sketches to illustrate the problems in the lesson.

- I have also learned to encourage students to talk over problems. So I spend more time than ever before having them ask questions and discuss with each other what they don't understand.

Consequently, we don't cover as much material in a day as my previous classes did. But I am convinced that the more I can involve students in the problems they work, the more likely they are to think about them. Thinking is the task I want to keep them on.

Frances Spielberg teaches mathematics at Hoover High School, Glendale, California.

TEXAS' CHARLES HEAD

'Beware 'killer' lab assistants.'

 Two of my favorite ways to keep my science classes on task are using student lab assistants and signing and dating students' notes. I have used both techniques successfully in grades 9-12 in courses in physical science, biology, and chemistry.

First, the lab assistants. They are definitely a two-edged sword, with the sharper edge always facing the teacher's throat. Still, assistants help me to reduce the amount of time I spend checking the roll and carrying extra forms to the office, pass out and retrieve test papers, grade (some) papers, and decrease the pupil-teacher ratio.

I find that I can contain the problems associated with using student assistants by keeping them very, very busy. Problems generally arise when assistants have time to abuse their authority, as when—

- For a practical joke, one student assistant sent failure notices to all of his straight-A friends.

- Another assistant thought that the Honor Society initiation would be improved with the addition of butyric acid (which smells like vomit) "borrowed" from my lab.

- In a more criminal vein, an assistant who was also president of the National Honor Society sold copies of my final exam for \$15 apiece.

Engaging in these episodes didn't do

these students any permanent damage. "Failure Notices" is now a successful doctor, and "Butyric Acid" is a leading chemical researcher. "Final Exams" turned away from a life of crime—he is currently a successful attorney and school board member.

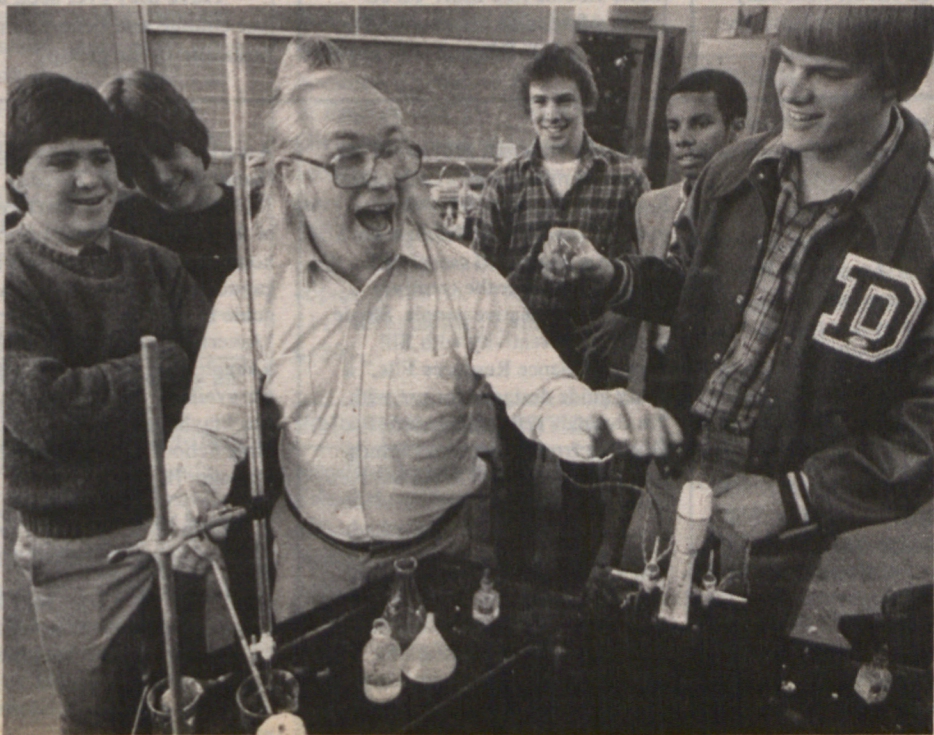
Now, for signing and dating student notes. The technique is useful with students who have low reading levels or

who are generally difficult to manage. I look to see whether they have been taking notes on class discussion, working on assigned vocabulary or questions, and

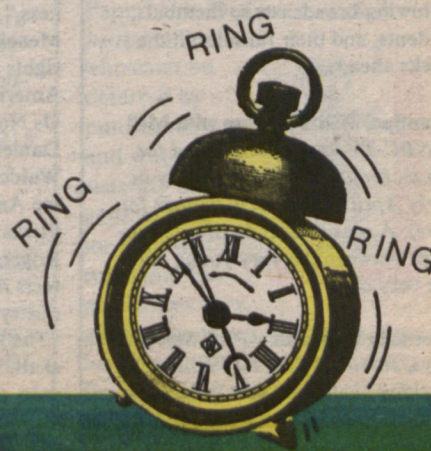
writing up their laboratory experiments.

The students receive two benefits: immediate gratification for having done the work and experience in keeping a notebook.

When he is not trying to control the monsters he has created in his science laboratory, Charles Head teaches chemistry at Hillcrest High School, Dallas, Texas.

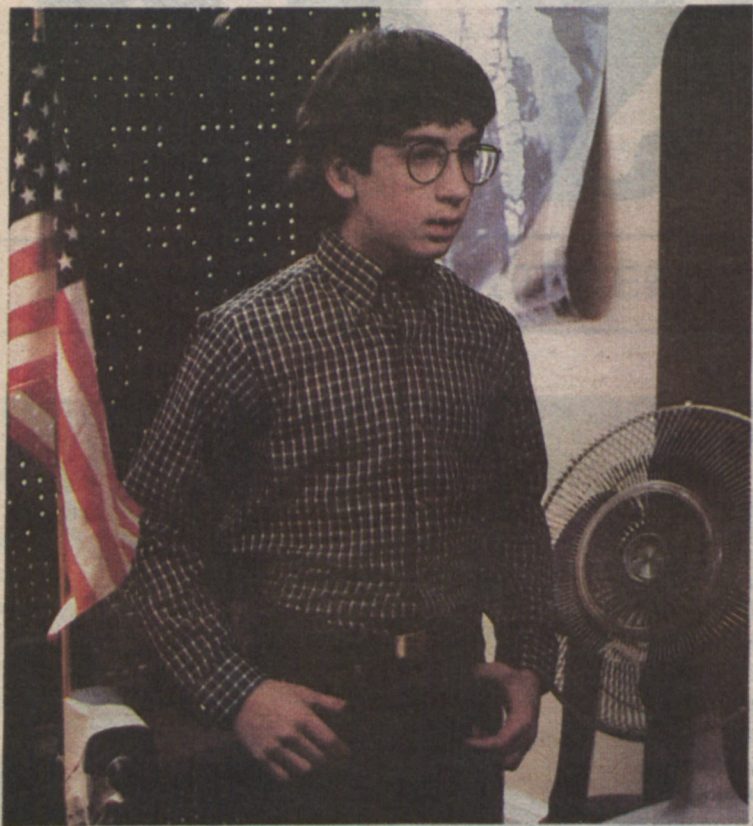


Layne Murdoch



TELEVISION

'Revenge of the Nerd'



Manny Jacobs stars as Bertram Cummings in the April 19 "CBS Afternoon Playhouse" drama, "Revenge of the Nerd."

A sensitive drama about an all-too-common adolescent problem, "Revenge of the Nerd" will air on CBS-TV stations Tuesday, April 19, from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. (Eastern time).

This NEA-recommended "CBS Afternoon Playhouse" production lends itself very well to classroom and family discussion. The following is a suggested study guide for use before and after the broadcast.

Grade level: Intermediate and high school

Subject area: Social studies, language, psychology, guidance

Objectives

- To identify stereotypes of teenage personalities.
- To realize the cause-and-effect relationship sometimes created by our actions.
- To recognize that people who are "different" in readily appar-

ent ways run a greater risk of being treated unfairly than those who conform to the norm.

- To understand that life's difficulties can be made bearable with the support of others.

Synopsis

Ninth grader Bertram Cummings, experiencing the pains of adolescence, tries to find a niche among his peers. But he alienates his classmates—including Louise, the object of his first crush.

Known as the class "nerd," Bertram reinforces this image by becoming a "klutz," an "egg-head," and a slob.

His two strengths—intelligence and technical knowledge—allow him to attempt to solve his problems in an unusual fashion.

Although he meets with only limited success, he does learn the importance of being himself.

Before Viewing

- Write the following names on the board: Freda Flatbush, Bertram Cummings, Aloysius Moon. Have each student write a description of one of these people—based solely on the name.

Ask if any of your students would like to have such names. Why? Why not? Discuss the ways we sometimes prejudge people on the basis of something as unimportant as their names.

Upcoming TV drama can help your students probe their own feelings about popularity, stereotypes, and the dread of being 'different.'

- Ask, "On what other basis do we form opinions of people?" Discuss such factors as clothes, homes, and speech.

- Ask, "What type of clothing helps make someone acceptable? Construct a class description of the 'most acceptable person.' Consider hairstyles, clothing, and physical traits.

- Explain that "Revenge of the Nerd" tells a story about a less "acceptable" person. Ask the class to consider what makes him unacceptable—and what he does to change his situation.

- Ask students to watch "Revenge of the Nerd" with an adult and then discuss which of the adults in the show appears most realistic. What changes could be made in order for all the adults to appear realistic? Would these changes affect the plot? Can the adult think of any TV programs that portray his or her age group unrealistically? Can the student?

After Viewing

Questions for discussion:

1. Who considered Bertram unacceptable? His peers? He himself?
2. What did Bertram do to make Louise like him? To become a friend to his peers? Was he successful? Why or why not?

3. What role did Dalton play in Bertram's problem? Bertram's parents? Louise? Mike Godney? Mr. Barnes? In real life, would any of these persons have acted differently?

Activities

1. Have students identify three or more stereotypes in their age group.
2. Select a common experience, such as lunch in the cafeteria, a football game, or a bus

Discuss the interview results in class, or have students prepare a written report.

7. Ask students to work with their families to list as many popular TV shows as possible that have a "nerd" as a regular character, and to decide together what makes each of those characters a "nerd."

8. Different people value different qualities. In "Revenge of the Nerd," Bertram's peers valued athletic ability, faddish dress, etc. Have students make a list of five qualities they value in others. Then have them each ask five people of varying ages (parents, grandparents, neighbors, friends) each to list five. Examine the lists and identify similarities and differences. Why do these exist?

9. Invite your school counselor or psychologist to speak to the class on the importance of peer acceptance or other adolescent problems, using "Revenge of the Nerd" as a starting point for the discussion.

Related Reading

Gilbert, Nan. *The Unchosen*. Harper and Row, 1963; paperback edition, 1973.

McKay, Robert. *The Troublemaker: A Story About Now, and Then, and Always*. Nelson, 1971. Dell paperback, 1972.

Ball, Zachary. *Bristle Face*. Holiday, 1962. Scholastic paperback, 1967.

Morgan, Alison. *A Boy Called Fish*. Harper and Row, 1973; paperback edition, 1973.



Association member Camille Elizabeth Faith, who prepared this study guide, teaches fifth grade at Gunpowder Elementary School in Baltimore County, Maryland. A 1978 recipient of an NEA Hilda Maehling Fellowship for a television literacy project, she has represented NEA in the development of children's TV series.

Other NEA-Recommended Viewing This Month

In addition to "Revenge of the Nerd," NEA recommends the following broadcasts to members, students, and their families in the weeks ahead:

Grandpa, Will You Run with Me?—NBC-TV special scheduled for 7 p.m. broadcast on a Saturday in early April (check local listings for date). A sensitive study of relationships between the very young and the very old.

Freedoms To Speak—PBS, Sundays, 10-10:30 p.m. ET. William F. Buckley hosts a 12-part series celebrating American oratory via debates among historical figures

played by a stellar cast. April 3: "The Business of America Is Business." Andrew Carnegie, H. L. Mencken, and others argue the rights and responsibilities of American business. April 10: "Let Us Now Praise Famous Men." Daniel Webster, Lucy Stone, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and others examine American heroes. April 17: "On Power." Douglas MacArthur, Will Rogers, and others discuss the effects of power on government, industry, and the people. April 24: "The Delicate Balance." John Marshall, Sam Ervin, Abraham Lincoln, and others debate the division of power among the three branches of government.

Creativity with Bill Moyers—PBS, repeats of the 17-part weekly series begin Sunday, April 10, 7-8 p.m. ET (check local listings; not all PBS stations will carry). Bill Moyers examines the creative process and creative people. Single copies of "Creativity with Bill Moyers Science Resource File," a study guide designed for use with 7th through 12th graders, are available free from Channel 13 Education Division, 356 W. 58th St., New York, NY 10019.

The Computer Programme—PBS, 10 weekly programs premiering Saturday, April 16, 7:30-8 p.m. ET. Series explores theoretical and practical fundamentals to demystify the computer and overcome viewers' computer anxiety.

American Playhouse: Medal of Honor Rag—PBS, Tuesday, April 19, 9-10 p.m. ET. A Black recipient of the Medal of Honor returns home from Vietnam to find he cannot support his family. A study guide for the entire 1982-83 "American Playhouse" series and a supplement on next fall's dramas are available for \$3 from "American Playhouse," Dept. N, Prime Time School TV, 40 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611.

Weekend Special—ABC-TV, Saturday, April 23 and Sunday, April 30, 12-12:30 p.m. ET. Parts I and II of "May Day, May Day," a drama based on the novel by Hilary Martin. Two youngsters search for help in rugged terrain after their parents are injured in a plane crash.

Big Bird in China—NBC-TV, Sunday, April 24, 7-8:30 p.m. ET. Part adventure story, part treasure hunt, part love story, part travel tour, this is the first Chinese and American TV co-production for family viewing.

I, Leonardo—CBS-TV, Monday, April 25, 8-9 p.m. ET. Frank Langella stars; Richard Burton narrates a script drawn from Leonardo da Vinci's notebooks.

Afterschool Special—ABC-TV, Wednesday, April 27, 4-5 p.m. ET. Repeat of "Tough Girl," an adaptation of Barbara Morgenroth's novel *Will the Real Renie Lake Please Stand Up?* A lonely and vulnerable young girl learns to care about herself through friendship with a deaf boy and a psychiatrist.

RESOURCES

Idea Exchange

150 Heads Are Better Than One

The Teacher Center for Area Education Agency 7 in Waterloo, Iowa, has put together a resource book for substitutes that any group of teachers can imitate, reports Diane Gibson, the Center director.

The Center asked teachers to write up their favorite activities for substitutes and published the resulting collection. The 226-page book contains ideas for getting acquainted and classroom management; building students' self-concepts; improving skills in general or in specific subjects—language arts, math, art, and physical education; and holding recess on a rainy day.

A teacher can direct the substitute's attention to a particular exercise, or just provide the book and let the sub choose. The book itself is very simple, repro-



duced on three-hole paper and held together with roundhead fasteners.

The Teacher Center gave a copy to each contributor. Other local teachers can buy a copy at a low price. Unfortunately, Gibson says, the supply is too limited to allow for wider distribution.

You Can't Make An Omelette . . .

Every year the science teachers at Indian Hills Junior High School in West Des Moines, Iowa, sponsor a Great Egg Drop. The practice began as a way to liven up the content in the science courses. By now, in its ninth year, it's a tradition.

First the science classes study gravity and motion. The students then have three weeks to encase eggs in any kind of material they think will keep them from breaking when they fall.

On the day the projects are due, all the students and science teachers go outdoors. One teacher drops all the projects, one at a time, from the school roof—a height of about 20 feet.



Everybody watches the projects drop and discusses why each egg did or did not break. The students enjoy the activity, report science teachers Lynn Altemeier (*bottom of column 2*) and Jack Nicodemus (*above*), and the teachers like the learning that results.



Sharing the Family

Each week Linda Crain of Columbia, South Carolina, highlights one of her second graders—and the child's family as well.

Crain, who teaches at the Nursery Road Elementary School, invites the student of the week to bring in family pictures for the bulletin board, the recipe for a favorite food, a favorite book for Crain to read during story time, and maybe a household pet or personal treasure.

Crain encourages an adult from the child's family to come in, too, one day that week. The



adult may tell about his or her job or about activities the family likes to do together.

In past years, adults have brought in slides or home movies, family collections (for example, stamps), or a taste of the child's favorite food for everyone in the class. Some teach the class a craft in which they're especially skilled.

Crain, who began the practice in 1975, starts each year off with her own family pictures and her own parents, who come in and answer students' questions about their teacher.

The activity has helped students feel good about themselves and know one another better, says Crain. She reports that many other second grade teachers in her district have adopted the idea.

Grammar Is for Using

Punctuation marks and parts of speech aren't just a teacher's whim—they're necessary for communication, points out Mina Berger Lewis, and she proves it to her classes.

Lewis, who teaches third grade at the Hatfield (Pennsylvania) Elementary School, asks her pupils to pick out nouns, verbs, commas, and so on in their sci-

ence, social studies, and library books.

Lewis may give her pupils directions such as these:



1. Look in your science book and find—

- A sentence with a proper noun.
- Two sentences with quotation marks.
- An asking sentence with a pronoun.
- A sentence with commas.
- Three sentences with verbs.

2. Copy the sentences and underline the items you found. Add the page number and the name of the book.

The best proof that the children are learning from these searches, Lewis says, is the improvement in their own writing.

If you're using a classroom activity that you think other NEA members might like to know about, please send a description to Idea Exchange, NEA Today, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

Free or Inexpensive

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Looking In On Your School: A Workbook for Improving Public Education. The National PTA. Booklet. The latest revision of the National PTA's guide for parents to use in evaluating their child's school, including its ability to attract and hold competent teachers. 1982. 36 pp. \$3. The National PTA, 700 N. Rush St., Chicago, IL 60611.



MOTIVATION

Ten Steps for Motivating Reluctant Learners. Robert C. Hawley. Booklet. Helps teachers decide what—and what not—to say and do to help reluctant learners turn their negative work attitudes around. 1982. 42 pp. \$3.95. Education Research Associates, Box 767-R, Amherst, MA 01004.

NUTRITION

Food 2 and Food 3. American Dietetic Association (ADA). Booklets. *Food 2*, which includes 42 recipes, advises on how to control weight; *Food 3*, with 22

recipes, shows how to reduce levels of total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol in meals and snacks. 1982. Respectively 52 pp. and 20 pp. Special package price for both titles, \$7.50 plus \$2 postage and handling per order. ADA, 430 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611.

STUDENT HEALTH

Young People with Cancer: A Handbook for Parents. National Cancer Institute and National Candlelighters Foundation (an organization for parents of children with cancer). Booklet. Helps parents know what to expect in helping children with cancer receive treatment. Describes types of cancer common in children and adolescents; gives information about therapies, including drug side effects; discusses effects of illness on other family members. 1982. 93 pp. Free. National Cancer Institute, Bldg. 31, Rm 10A18, Bethesda, MD 20205.

NEWSPAPERS IN CLASS

Bibliography: Newspapers in Education Publications. American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA) Foundation. Lists more than 100 publications, many prepared by newspapers themselves, designed to help teachers use newspapers in the classroom. 4th edition, 1982. 51 pp. Single copies free. ANPA Foundation, The Newspaper Center, Box 17404, Dulles Inter-

national Airport, Washington, DC 20041.

LETTER WRITING

Free Stuff for Kids. Paperback. Designed for use by children who can read and write. Lists more than 250 free or up-to-\$1 items, such as a pamphlet on steel-making and a poster about animals, that children can write away for. 1982. 113 pp. \$3.75 postpaid. Meadowbrook Press, 18318 Minnetonka Blvd., Deephaven, MN 55391.



P.S. Write soon! All about letters. U.S. Postal Service and National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Booklet. Gives more than 100 ideas for activities to encourage youngsters in grades 4-8 to write letters. 1982. 64 pp. \$2.50 each; \$1.50 each in class sets of 20 or more copies. Stock no. 37962. NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Reading in the Business Education Classroom. Larry Mikulecky and Rita Haugh. National Education Association. Booklet. Presents practical, non-technical ways in which business teachers who have no special training in teaching reading can help students improve their com-

prehension of textbooks, assignments, instruction. 48 pp. \$6.95. Stock no. 3208-X-OD. NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Basic Photography, Basic Darkroom Techniques, Advanced Photography, Processing and Printing Color Negatives, and Basic Movie-making. Instructional guides for teaching courses of six to 13 sessions each on the title topics. Student pamphlets and posters accompany some guides. Single copies of one or all of the guides are free. Eastman Kodak Co., Dept. 841, 343 State St., Rochester, NY 14650.

ENGLISH

Essential Vocabulary for College-Bound Students. Margaret Ann Haller. Paperback. Presents more than 600 words in 50 lessons, plus some 300 terms from social sciences, arts, and language and literature, that are of special interest to undergraduates and college-bound secondary students. 1982. 200 pp. \$5.95. Arco Publishing, Inc., 215 Park Ave. S., New York, NY 10003—or from booksellers.

SOCIAL STUDIES

The Third World: Exploring U.S. Interests. John W. Sewell and John A. Mathieson. Explores political, strategic, and

economic interests of the United States in the developing countries of the Third World. Foreign Policy Association (FPA) Headline Series #259. 1982. 64 pp. \$3 plus 70¢ postage and handling (prepaid). Quantity discounts available. FPA, 205 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10016.

GLOBAL EDUCATION

Cross-Cultural Learning in K-12 Schools: Foreign Students as Resources. National Association for Foreign Student Affairs (NAFSA). Booklet. Suggests how K-12 schools can involve foreign students in efforts to add a global dimension to curriculum and activities for all students. 1982. 105 pp. \$5. NAFSA, 1860 19th St., N.W. Washington, DC 20009.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Helping the Maladjusted Child: A Guide for Parents and Teachers. Denis H. Stott. Paperback. Defines as *maladjusted* children who can't be deterred by punishment and who persistently engage in behavior that invites rejection. Explains how they got that way and what to do to help them. 1982. 141 pp. \$5.95. Prentice-Hall/Spectrum, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632.



BOOK BEAT

Of Ideology...

Compelling Belief: The Culture of American Schooling by Stephen Arons. McGraw-Hill. 228 pp. \$19.95.

"This book is about the stifling of dissent by an institution widely acclaimed as the bulwark of democracy in America"—the public schools. So says Stephen Arons, attorney specializing in student rights and author of *Compelling Belief*.

Arons contends that our compulsory public school system inevitably subjects parents' "private choices based upon conscience and belief" to the approval of the local majority, thus threatening "freedom of expression and the vitality of dissent."

In a curious sleight of hand, Arons has substituted ideology—"the private choices based upon conscience and belief"—for religion under the First Amendment. Consequently, he argues, parents have a constitutional right not to have their children subjected to alien ideologies while they are attending tax-supported schools under compulsory schooling laws.

As a result, Arons sympathizes with the "plight," if not the views, of the fundamentalist and countercultural parents he interviewed for this book. Unable to accept the "godlessness"—or "bureaucratization"—they found in the public schools, they sent their children to private schools or tried to educate them at home.

To protect everyone's rights, Arons says, we must finance education in such a way that families will not need to be wealthy to obtain an ideologically appropriate education for their children. He appears to advocate the use of vouchers.

Which is too bad, because the first third of his book—the analysis part—is on target. Arons is correct to attribute the book battles in our schools to the American culture's loss of a central belief.

But who wants what would result from his remedy—a string of ideologically pure, tax-supported schools, each socializing children according to its own formula?

Surely, it was not separatism of this sort but tolerance that the First Amendment was designed to encourage.

Reviewed by Ruth N. Lysne, chair, Task Force on Academic Freedom, Minnesota Education Association; English teacher, Faribault (Minn.) Senior High School.

...and Sociology

Hard Knocks: Preparing Youth for Work by Bonnie Snedeker. Johns Hopkins University Press. 180 pp. \$14.95.

As I began to read about the 16 young people featured in *Hard Knocks*, I said to myself, "These are my students." Their stories of problem-ridden families, of drug use, of premature pregnancy and fatherhood, of life with inhospitable relatives are all too familiar to those who work in schools today.

In one key respect, however, the 16 are unlike my students: they are not in school. And because they have dropped out, they are at risk for failing to make a successful transition from school to work.

In fact, they are the unemployable youth for whom federal employment

training programs, such as the now defunct Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), were designed. And it was in CETA programs in Boston, Kalamazoo, and Portland (Oreg.) that author Bonnie Snedeker found them.

Over the course of a year, she interviewed several hundred CETA trainees. From these she selected 16, half of them Black and half White, for intensive interviews about family, school, and employment experiences. The book consists primarily of excerpts from these interviews.

In the chapter on "Schooling," Snedeker observes that school often was the place where these young people discovered how they stood in relation to their

peers—a discovery that convinced most of them by the time they reached high school that they would never fit in.

Only one, a young man from Portland, participated in a high school program that offered training in a variety of work skills, such as drafting and photography. He was one of the few trainees who, by the end of the interview year, was embarked firmly on a career.

When the new Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), the successor law to CETA, goes into effect this October, more students should find useful vocational/career programs in their public schools. Thanks to NEA-led lobbying, JTPA gives public schools the oppor-

tunity to obtain more funds for vocational training than they ever had under CETA.

Snedeker characterizes the ideal youth training program as one that is community- or neighborhood-based and that gives students access to a wide range of work experiences. Given adequate funding, what institutions can better meet these criteria than existing public school/community college vocational programs?

Reviewed by Peggy Dotson, marketing and distributive education teacher, Jasper, Alabama; chair, NEA Vocational, Practical, Technical Arts Committee; member, NEA Board of Directors.

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- 3. Word Recognition Skills: A Reading Skillbuilder.** Harry W. Forgan. Aids students to progress from recognizing a word by sight to understanding its use with prefixes, suffixes, and accent marks. Publisher's Price \$5.95.
- 4. 20 Reading Comprehension Games.** Maria Love. Worksheets can be reproduced to create game boards and card games. Publisher's Price \$8.95.
- 5. Reading For Survival In Today's Society.** Anne H. Adams, Anne Flowers, and Elsa E. Woods. Over 100 reproducible worksheets—with true-to-life examples. Includes labels, schedules, magazine facts, current events, weather reports, and more. Publisher's Price \$11.95.
- 6. Reading Unlimited File Folder Games.** ShaKean Stations, Inc. 24 file folder reading games in full color. 17"×15" game boards, plus all components, not including file folders. Publisher's Price \$21.95.

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People



What's it like to teach school in a maximum security prison? Georgia's **David Wood** finds it very different from teaching in public school—but every bit as rewarding.

Wood is president of the Alto Association of Educators, the NEA/GAE affiliate at Alto Industrial Institute. He and his colleagues teach academic courses to inmates 18 to 21 years old.

"The students' reading abilities range from first to twelfth grade level," Wood says, "so we divide the program into literacy remediation, adult basic education, and preparation for the high school equivalency exam."

There's much less interaction between students and teachers than in public schools, Wood explains, and the working environment seems "clinical—even cold."

But Wood takes pride in helping train young inmates to get and hold jobs upon their release. "Some of our students go on to take college courses. A few now hold college degrees," he boasts.



The day after Port Arthur, Texas, cafeteria supervisor **Thelma Sigur**, left, learned how to administer the Heimlich maneuver, she saved the life of teacher Joyce Weatherall.

It happened quickly. One moment Weatherall was talking

with friends in the Franklin Elementary School cafeteria, the next she was gasping for breath.

Sigur rushed over and put her arms around Weatherall. Clasp- ing her hands, Sigur administered several abdominal thrusts. Soon Weatherall caught her

breath and a minute later was breathing normally.

"We've always been close," says Weatherall. "Everyone loves Mrs. Sigur, but now we're even closer." Both are members of the Port Arthur Educators Association/TSTA.



The performances are live—and lively—when the Roosevelt Troupe of Storytellers visits a library, school, hospital, or college classroom.

Language arts

teacher and Association member **Robert Rubinstein** holds auditions for the 12-member troupe each year.

The troupe's activities constitute an elective course at Roosevelt Junior High in Eugene, Oregon. Most troupe members are veterans of Rubinstein's basic storytelling course, which is open to anyone in grades 7 through 9. For this class, each student chooses a repertoire of four stories to tell.

From telling their stories to a friend (or pet), students progress to using varied intonations and gestures. They learn to handle distractions—and to improvise if they forget details.

Rubinstein, author of two novels for young adults (*Who Wants To Be a Hero!* and *When Sirens Scream*), formed his first troupe in 1969. Now well-known in the storytelling field, he was invited last September to be a teller at the National Storytelling Festival in Tennessee. Support from his local Association and the Oregon Education Association made the trip possible.



The North Dakota legislature is considering a resolution supporting the new federal Equal Rights Amendment—and one of the chief sponsors is State Senator **Raymon Holmberg**.

Holmberg, a North Dakota Education Association activist and a member of NEA's Legislative Committee, credits the birth of his daughter, Mariah, in 1973 with awakening his awareness of the need for equal rights.

"When she was just one hour old, a nurse stereotyped her as either a future nurse or a future secretary," Holmberg recalled in recent testimony before the legislature's judiciary committee.

For a while last year two elementary teachers in Ong, Nebraska, thought their ordeal would never end.

Beverly Johnson's and **Jean Huntley's** troubles began last spring when three mothers (who were also sisters) accused them of harassing and abusing their six children.

Huntley (pictured here with two students not involved in the case) and Johnson were shocked. In their combined 24 years at Ong Elementary, neither had ever had a problem with a parent.

The school board investigated and found absolutely no basis for the accusations. Two of the three mothers persisted, filing charges with the state professional practices commission.

The mothers' complaints were

heard by two commission members last April, but the teachers were forced to wait until September to defend themselves.

At the hearing, Johnson and Huntley described their classroom demeanor as firm but never verbally or physically abusive. A host of parents and administrators backed them up.

This winter—eight months after the contretemps broke out—the full commission found the teachers innocent.

Johnson and Huntley are pleased with the "great community support" and the backing of their school board.

Both say they're disappointed, however, with the commission's procedures and the many months it took to get the case resolved, "including a long and stressful summer."



For California teacher **Maryel Roberts**, going home means a 90-minute drive. That's bad enough, but the drive follows a 70-minute flight.

Maryel teaches third grade in La Puente, near Los Angeles, while her husband, **Dennis**, teaches music in Susanville, 600 miles to the north. As a result, the couple can get together only when they have at least four days off.

The Robertses originally lived

in Southern California, but they wanted to teach in a more rural area. When Dennis got a chance to work in Susanville, in the northern mountains, he took it, thinking that Maryel could soon join him.

But teachers don't seem to be interested in leaving the Susanville area, and when they do, the positions aren't filled.

Maryel Roberts' long and expensive commute is now five years old.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

April 20 Will Be 'National Teachers Day'

What are you doing Wednesday, April 20?

If you're like many NEA members, you'll be observing "National Teachers Day," a special occasion called for by vote of the delegates to the 1982 NEA Representative Assembly in Los Angeles.

"This day will be an annual opportunity for the public to recognize and honor the vital contributions of America's public school teachers," explains NEA President Willard McGuire.

"At the same time, it will give teachers an opportunity to focus their communities' attention on the importance of supporting the public schools.

"We see the day not as an end in itself, but as another means of building

public support for public education," McGuire stresses.

NEA is providing materials to state affiliates to facilitate observance of the day—materials drawing heavily on local and state Association community relations efforts that have proved effective in the past.

Suggested activities include inviting mayors, legislators, and other elected officials to come into a school and teach for an hour or—even better—all day, helping local news media find school "success

stories" for publication or broadcast on April 20, and suggesting that talk show hosts ask callers to comment on "the most influential teacher" in their lives.

Many of the community outreach activities traditionally scheduled for American Education Week in the fall also lend themselves well to this one-day spring observance.

NEA has been contacting the greeting card, flower, and candy industries to inform them about National Teachers Day and urge them to include it in their planning and marketing strategies.

NEA lobbyists are urging members of Congress to spend the day teaching school in their home districts, hoping they'll gain a new firsthand appreciation of the problems and challenges teachers regularly face.

National Teachers Day is slated for the third Wednesday after Easter Sunday, in order to allow teachers everywhere at least a week and a half of preparation time after returning from spring vacation.

This year a few states already have statewide Teachers Day observances planned for different dates. NEA's National Teachers Day materials will be useful in support of these state activities, whenever they take place.

Happy Teachers Day!

TOP SCORER

Grade averaging calculator earns high marks from educators for speed, convenience, accuracy.

Averaging letter grades is one of the most tedious and least rewarding parts of teaching. Each year, you spend hundreds of hours translating letters into numbers, figuring out how to weight grades, and going through a division process to come up with yet another number to be converted back into a letter grade. Even if you're using a numerical point system for daily grading, you still probably have to convert to a letter for the final course grade.

This drudgery, busy work takes time away from the more creative aspects of teaching—time away from students—time away from yourself and your family. But how can you make things better?

A TEACHER FOUND THE SOLUTION

Working in a suburban California school, Susan McGuire went through the same grade averaging traumas as you do. Sue figured that she handled nearly a quarter million grades each year, which took *more than forty days of her own time*. Then she found a better way. Sue invented the GradeMaker™ calculator to handle the entire process quickly, automatically, and accurately. In fact, her GradeMaker even weights scores and comes up with class averages!

SAVES YOU HOURS!

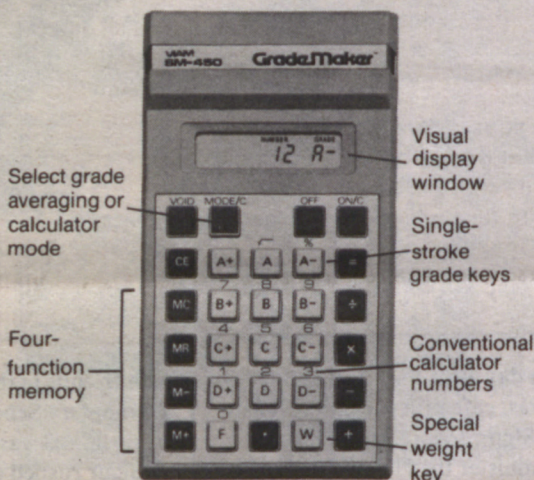
"Teachers have to see GradeMaker in action to believe how fast it is," Sue says. "All you have to do is punch in the letters, without even a plus in between. As you go along, the display shows how many grades you've already entered, so you don't have to start all over if you're interrupted. When you've entered all the student's grades, just press the equals key, and the letter grade average appears. It's that easy!"

GradeMaker reduces your grade averaging time from hours to minutes. In fact, it can cut the time spent with ordinary calculators by two-thirds. Let's take a closer look at GradeMaker to see how it operates. Also, try these examples on a conventional calculator, and you'll be convinced that you can save yourself lots of time.

GRADEMAKER IN ACTION

Here's how easily you can average five letter grades. Get GradeMaker going by pressing the "ON" key, then press "MODE" until the display shows the words "NUMBER" and "GRADE"

Now press just one key to enter each of the five grades—A, A-, B+, D-, and C.



Press	Display Shows
A	NUMBER 1 GRADE A
A-	NUMBER 2 GRADE A-
B+	NUMBER 3 GRADE B+
D-	NUMBER 4 GRADE D-
C	NUMBER 5 GRADE C
=	NUMBER 5 GRADE B-

In less time than it takes to read about it, you have the answer—an average grade of B—with *just 6 key strokes*. On a conventional calculator (scale from 13 for an A+ to 1 for an F), you'd have to press *15 keys* then convert back to a letter; with number grades based on 100-point assignments—*20 keys* and a conversion.

Let's explore another GradeMaker exclusive—the special "WEIGHT" key that lets you weight major tests, projects or term papers from 1-99 times the value of other individual grades—all without creating elaborate formulas.

Grades: A C B- B+ A- B
Weight: 1 1 4 1 1 12
(1's are for homework, 4 for mid-term, and 12 for the final.)

Press	Display Shows
A	NUMBER 1 GRADE A
C	NUMBER 2 GRADE C
B-	NUMBER 3 GRADE B-
X ("WEIGHT" will appear in display)	NUMBER 3 GRADE B-
4 (Weight value)	NUMBER 4 GRADE B-

W	NUMBER 4 GRADE B-
B+	NUMBER 4 GRADE B+
A-	NUMBER 5 GRADE A-
B	NUMBER 6 GRADE B
X	NUMBER 6 GRADE B
1,2	NUMBER 12 GRADE B
W	NUMBER 12 GRADE B
(For weighted average answer)	NUMBER 6 GRADE B

GRADEMAKER DOES MORE

GradeMaker also has a four function memory so you can quickly compute class averages for as many as 99 students per class. And it doubles as a conventional calculator with square root, percentage, reciprocal, and automatic constant functions.

GradeMaker comes with an easy-to-follow, 28-page instruction manual, convenient storage pouch—and even the batteries are included. (An automatic shutoff feature keeps your battery costs to a minimum.)

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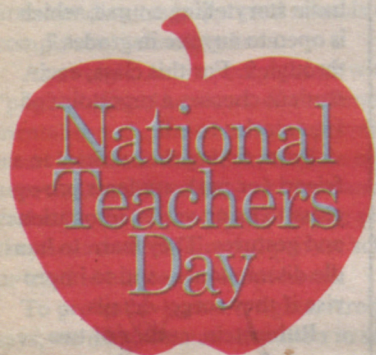
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A Strong America Needs Strong Public Schools

NEA's special poster for National Teachers Day will be appearing in communities across the nation this month.

EEL: For the Record

We regret that due to typographical errors, the program years were misstated in the 1982-83 and 1981-82 "Summary Plan Descriptions" of NEA's Educators Employment Liability (EEL) Program.

The introduction to the EEL summary plan description published in the December 1982 NEA Today (page 18) should have read: "The purpose of this summary is to inform NEA members about the structure and principal provisions of the 1982-83 NEA Educators Employment Liability Program, referred to as the 'EEL Program.'"

In the section on "Your Rights Under ERISA," the third item should have read: "You are entitled to summary financial reports for the year ending August 31, 1983, when they become available."

The introduction to the EEL "Summary Plan Description" published a year earlier, in the December 1981 NEA Reporter (page 14), should have read: "The purpose of this summary is to inform NEA members about the structure and principal provisions of the 1981-82 NEA Educators Employment Liability Program, referred to as the 'EEL Program.'"

In the section on "Your Rights Under ERISA," the third item should have read: "You are entitled to summary financial reports for the year ending August 31, 1982, when they become available."

PERSONALLY SPEAKING

LEISURE

Choosing The Right Seminar

A good seminar, workshop, or conference can help expand your horizons, improve your job performance, and even redirect your career.

A short-term course can be an ideal way to learn new skills and sharpen existing ones.

Unfortunately, many of the "career enhancement courses" being offered today are frankly worthless. They take advantage of people's worries about job security, as well as their natural desire to succeed.

If you're considering an educational program you feel would improve your job skills, it's important to evaluate it carefully before enrolling. Ask yourself these questions:

- *Is the program well defined?* Avoid courses that seem too broad or nebulous in scope. You're likely to be disappointed by the content. A fuzzy description indicates that the organizers of the course have not properly thought through what they will teach. Read the course description carefully to see if you will indeed be learning something new. Remember that a clever writer can make almost any program sound exciting.

- *Has the program been offered before?* Just as any teacher's lesson plans evolve and improve with each year, so does the content of a seminar or workshop. The first few times it's conducted, a seminar tends to be less efficient and less specific than it will become later. So whenever possible, choose a program that's been "tested" on others.

- *What are the speakers' credentials?* Some seminars are conducted not by experts but by professional seminar organizers who will speak on almost any topic for a fee. Nothing is more aggravating than paying money to sit through a program that you soon realize you could teach better yourself. Look instead for speakers with a depth of experience in the topic being covered.

- *Who will be attending?* The printed description should tell you for whom the seminar or workshop is geared. Read it carefully. Many seminars will also send you in advance a list of those who have signed up. If you notice that everyone else has a different job title from yours, you might be making a mistake. If so, check whether you can get a refund. You want the course to



be aimed at your own interests and expertise level.

- *Are the expenses really reimbursable or tax-deductible?* Before you sign up, make sure your employer will actually reimburse you. Likewise, if you're counting on a tax deduction for attending, make sure the course meets IRS requirements. April 15th is no time to discover that the program was not deductible. In general, the IRS will allow deductions for courses that improve your skills on your present job, but not for those that teach you new skills for a new career.

—NEA Special Services

HEALTH

Take a Giant Stride Toward Better Health

Americans spend a lot of money on health spas and expensive sports equipment to try to regain their physical fitness. Yet as an all-around exercise that's good for your health, ordinary walking is hard to beat.

You're already proficient at it, it requires no equipment, you can do it almost anywhere, and you can enjoy it alone or with friends.

Walking improves your circulation, helps you lose weight, reduces stress and anxiety, improves your muscle tone, and can even cure insomnia. Maybe best of all, walking doesn't put the stress on joints that jogging and many other forms of exercise do, so it's ideal for people of all ages and all degrees of physical fitness.

Your legs are important secondary blood pumps. As you

walk, the muscle contractions squeeze blood back up toward your heart, helping to improve your circulation. Walking also burns up calories—at least 100 per mile at a leisurely pace—and helps work off stress and tension. Many people find that an evening walk is better than a sleeping pill or nightcap for ensuring a good night's rest.

In walking, as in any other exercise, it's important to start slowly and work your way up. If you're not in the habit of walking much, don't risk overexertion. Start off with a level route that's short enough to be comfortable. As you progress you can increase your distance and pace and add hills to your route. Walk briskly, and swing your arms freely. If you don't like walking alone, take a friend!

One of the nice things about

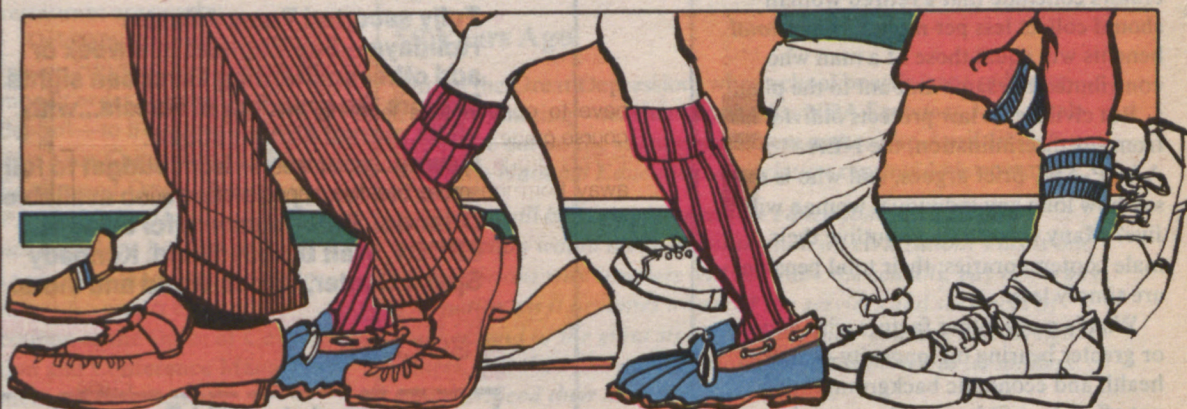
walking is that you can fit it into so many parts of your daily routine. Walk to the store if you won't have much to carry back. If you take public transportation to work, get off a few stops early and walk the rest of the way. Walking gives you a chance to explore that little shop or new restaurant you've whizzed past in your car so many times.

Walk to lunch. Use the stairs, not the elevator. Walk after dinner rather than watch TV. Your goal should be at least an hour of walking a day.

The only equipment you need is a pair of comfortable low-heeled shoes. You'll also want to wear loose clothing that will keep you warm if it's chilly but won't roast you once you start moving briskly. During the hot summer months, do your walking in the cooler parts of the day.

Don't be like the jogger who puts in several miles a day but then drives to the grocery four blocks away for a quart of milk. Fit walking into your daily routine and you'll be healthier and trimmer.

—NEA Special Services



MONEY

'Consumer English': How Fluent Are You?

English teachers have heard it all—the teen language where "bad" means good, the subtle codes of rock lyrics, the regionalisms that are indigenous to certain areas. Now, according to Virginia Knauer, director of the U.S. Office of Consumer Affairs, the time has come to learn Consumer English. And there's no better time to get your feet wet than during National Consumers Week, April 24-30.

Consumer English has its own codes, but unlike the other language aberrations, understanding them can spell lifelong protection in the marketplace.

Some examples:

- *Free*—Interpret as *beware*. A healthy skepticism is required here. You usually end up paying for free items in one way or another.

- *Only a few cents a week*—

Translate into *more expensive than it seems*. Remember, pennies soon add up to dollars. Calculate how much the item will cost when paid in full.

- *Sale*—Your response should be *question it*. Some stores have endless fire sales or "closing out" sales that are simply promotions at regular prices.

- *Lifetime guarantee*—Translate into *needs explanation*. Whose lifetime? Yours or the product's? What is the product's life expectancy?

- *Just sign here*—Means *stop im-*

mediately and read. You may be signing a binding contract.

- *Charity*—Your brain should tell you to *check it out*. Is it a legitimate charity? Query the Better Business Bureau or your local consumer agency.

- *Secret cure or remedy*—Spell this *quack*. It also means *ask your doctor*. Such claims are almost always false, and use of a "secret" product or treatment may delay legitimate treatment

and lead to dire consequences.

- *You wouldn't like the advertised product. Let me show you something better*—The term for this is *bait-and-switch*. It's illegal, but some stores practice it anyway.

- *Natural*—Frequently means *more expensive* without any value beyond that of similar products processed differently.

—U.S. Office of Consumer Affairs



YOU AND YOUR RETIREMENT

Sex-Based Pensions May Be Outlawed

It is illegal for a voluntary retirement plan to pay larger monthly annuity sums to male employees than to females who have put in equal contributions?

That's the question now before the U.S. Supreme Court in *Arizona Governing Committee v. Norris*, a case with major implications for the insurance and pension industries—as well as for any NEA member covered by an annuity or deferred compensation plan that pays men and women at different rates.

In a friend-of-the-court brief filed jointly with the American Association of University Professors and the American Federation of Teachers, NEA has asked the Supreme Court to uphold the Ninth Circuit Court's decision in the *Norris* case. That ruling struck down Arizona's deferred compensation plan for state employees as a violation of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

The controversy centers on the widespread use of actuarial tables showing that women as a class live longer than men. Because of this life expectancy, insurance companies and pension plan operators conclude that a retired woman should collect less per month, so her total benefits will equal those of a man who contributed the same amount to the plan.

But civil rights law protects individuals from sex discrimination, the NEA-AAUP-AFT brief argues, and who is to say how long any individual woman will live? Many women don't outlive their male contemporaries; their total pensions are simply less.

What's more, other factors with equal or greater bearing on longevity—such as health and economic background—do not affect benefit levels. The actuarial tables are segregated only by gender.

Association activist Dorothy Jenis, a high school English teacher in Manchester, N.H., and an outspoken advocate for retiree rights, says a Supreme Court decision outlawing the use of these tables would be "a step in the right direction."

"We have a long way to go in achieving equality for women in the workplace, and this discrimination in retirement benefits just compounds the problem," Jenis adds. "I'm glad to see it being brought to light."

Val Pullenn, a soon-to-be-retiring teacher on leave of absence from Nebraska's McCook City Schools, agrees.

"If a man lives longer than a woman," she says, "his benefits are not reduced. I fully believe that men and women should benefit equally."

The Supreme Court ruled in April 1978 that employers can't require women to pay more for pension benefits than men. The day that ruling came down, 58-year-old Arizona state government employee Nathalie Norris filed the federal suit that has now made its way to the high court.

She had discovered that based on life expectancy tables, Arizona's deferred compensation plan would pay her \$320.11 a month at age 65—while a man who had contributed the same amount and retired at the same age would get \$354.07.

Following Norris's victory in the lower courts, Arizona stopped offering the annuity option to its employees—and start-

ed making up the past differences in payments to women already retired.

Most immediately affected by a Supreme Court ruling upholding the lower courts in *Norris* would be "defined contribution" plans like TIAA-CREF, in which employers, employees, or both make set payments into retirement accounts. The contributions are usually the same for men and women, but the monthly payouts vary according to gender.

Most state teacher retirement plans use the "defined benefit" system to determine participants' basic benefits strictly on the basis of creditable service and final average salary. The *Norris* case will have no impact on such plans. But where options

are available, such as a joint and survivor annuity, longevity tables are used, and these will be affected by the *Norris* decision. Stay tuned. . . .

—Vicky Lytle

NEA-R Revises Dues ...And Starts a Caucus

Budget constraints have forced the NEA-Retired (NEA-R) program to change its dues policy for NEA life members.

Beginning June 1, these members will no longer be entitled to a \$25 discount on NEA-R membership. They must pay the same \$75 charged to other educators retired for one year or more, or \$50 if retired for over five years.

Membership in the brand-new NEA-Retired Caucus is open to any delegate to the 1983 NEA Representative Assembly, to be held this summer in Philadelphia.

Caucus members will meet to hear progress reports on the new NEA-Retired membership program and discuss changes in the NEA constitution and bylaws as they relate to NEA-R.

The caucus also plans to host a mini-seminar during the annual meeting for both retired and pre-retired delegates, covering personal financial planning, legal concerns, health and leisure, and state pension and retirement systems.

Caucus registration forms are available from NEA-R, Room 214, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

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REACHING OUT

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A comprehensive multimedia package is now available from NEA to help teachers at all levels and in all content areas improve their ability to teach reading.

Five years in preparation, with more than 125 outstanding teachers contributing, *Reading K-12: The NEA Inservice Training Program* includes 15 books, two audio cassettes, two filmstrips, a package of leaflets for parents, and a guide that suggests ways to coordinate the materials into 13 workshop modules.

For details write to the NEA Professional Library at NEA Center, Dept. D.

Congratulations!

When the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education put out the call for NEA members to develop new ways to use cameras to enhance K-12 teaching, some 800 creative teachers took up the challenge.

The 130 members submitting the best proposals have now been awarded grants of \$200 each, underwritten by Kodak, to carry out their classroom projects. Each will submit a final report this spring.

Six grand prize winners—two

When Writing NEA...

The address for NEA Center is 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

at \$1,500, two at \$1,000, and two at \$500—will be announced in June. Summaries of each of the 130 semifinalists' projects will be published next fall.

Based on this year's success, Kodak has decided to extend the "Cameras in the Curriculum" project for an additional year and to open the 1983-84 competition to NEA members in higher education.

Attention, Campers

The official campsite for this summer's NEA annual meeting is the Beechwood Recreation Area Campground in Coatesville, Pennsylvania—43 miles from the Philadelphia Civic Center. NEA will provide transportation to state caucuses, meetings at the Civic Center, and official evening events.

Campers may move in on June 29 or 30 and move out on July 5 or 6. The campground has excellent recreational facilities, and a shopping center and restaurant are nearby.

Delegates must send a registration coupon—with check or money order for one night's deposit—to Beechwood Recreation Area Campground, 105 Beechwood Drive, Coatesville, PA 19320, by May 31. NEA will not be able to hold unassigned space after that date. Delegates must also mail a copy of the coupon to the Office of Convention and Conference Management at NEA Center.

LOOKING BACK

• Our ill-chosen headline "When Daddy Is a Kidnapper" (*NEA Today*, Jan.-Feb. 1983) brought many rebukes from readers who pointed out that *mothers* kidnap their children as well. Not only parental kidnappings but custody laws and custody awards have tormented and outraged readers of both sexes across the country—parents, stepparents, and people who are simply hurt by children's pain.

Although no one has gathered nationwide statistics on parental kidnapping, an informal tally of complaints to the American Bar Association's Child Custody Project/Clearinghouse indicates that kidnappers are about evenly divided by gender.

• In February, the Texas state board of education, at the suggestion of the Texas State Teachers Association and People for the American Way, voted to allow citizens who like a particular textbook to say so out loud at the state textbook committee's annual adoption hearing held in August.

Reformers hope the change will end the monopoly on publicity that has gone by default to conservative textbook critics Mel and Norma Gabler ("Textbooks Under Fire," *NEA Today*, Dec. 1982). Under the old rules, citizens could make only negative comments about a text (until last summer, when positive *written* comments were allowed for the first time).

50 Years Ago

During the Great Depression, when school boards were reducing—if not eliminating—teacher paychecks, NEA Secretary J. W. Crabtree spoke out on the sacrifices teachers make. The April 1933 *Journal of the National Education Association* reprinted his comment:

"There will be no moratorium on education. A moratorium on education would mean a moratorium on civilization. This is one of the reasons why teachers will continue the schools, pay or no pay. The nation, as it becomes aware of the services and sacrifices of teachers and of the great significance of their courage and foresight, will show the appreciation that it has shown to its soldiers who sacrificed their lives for their country."

TAKING A STAND

NEA Board of Directors Redirects Allocations

Under a policy set by the NEA Board of Directors in 1975, the NEA newspaper must publish all roll-call votes of the Board. Here are the latest such votes.

December 3-4, 1982

Subjects:

#1: To amend the 1982-83 NEA Program and Budget by transferring the sum of \$774,675 (half the appropriated sum of \$1,549,350) from "contingency" to "reserve." (110 YES, 0 NO, 11 NOT VOTING, 5 ABSENT, 2 other absentees replaced by alternates)

#2: To appropriate \$25,000 for transmission to the Hawaii State Teachers Association as a contribution toward assisting teachers who suffered significant losses during Hurricane Iwa. (107 YES, 7 NO, 7 NOT VOTING, 5 ABSENT, 2 other absentees replaced by alternates)

February 18-19, 1983

#3: To appropriate \$30,000 from contingency funds to develop resource materials to implement the directive of new business item 1982-21 (for development of teaching materials on the KKK and other groups that advocate racism, religious prejudice, and violence). (122 YES, 0 NO, 0 ABSTENTIONS, 3 NOT VOTING, 4 ABSENT, 1 other absentee replaced by alternate)

Key:

'Y'—voted in favor
'NV'—vote not recorded
'O'—absent from meeting
**—alternate director
***—submitted statement of position

NAME	STATE	Roll Call #	1	2	3
Butler	Ala.		Y	Y	Y
Dotson	Ala.		Y	Y	Y
McDanal	Ala.		O	O	Y
Potter	Alaska		Y	Y	Y
Beachem	Ariz.		Y	Y	Y
Saylor	Ariz.		Y	Y	Y
Johnson	Ark.		Y	Y	Y
Bittle	Calif.		Y	Y	Y
Curfman	Calif.		O	O	Y
Gooden	Calif.		Y	Y	Y
Hodgkins	Calif.		Y	Y	Y
Reising	Calif.		Y	Y	Y
Shaw	Calif.		Y	Y	Y
Vick	Calif.		Y	Y	Y
Williams	Calif.		Y	Y	Y
*Wittman	Calif.		Y	Y	
Lansford	Colo.		Y	Y	Y
Morris	Colo.		Y	Y	Y
**Chase	Conn.		Y	Y	NV
Gagliardi	Conn.		Y	Y	Y
Testerman	Del.		O	O	Y
*Young	Del.		Y	Y	
Winter	D.C.		Y	Y	Y
Scott	Fla.		Y	Y	Y
Wilson	Fla.		Y	Y	Y
Eller	Ga.		Y	Y	Y
Wright	Ga.		NV	NV	NV
Lum	Hawaii		Y	Y	Y

NAME	STATE	Roll Call #	1	2	3
Hovey	Idaho		Y	Y	Y
Barrow	Ill.		Y	N	Y
Price	Ill.		Y	Y	O
Tucker	Ill.		Y	N	O
Miller	Ind.		Y	Y	Y
Moudy	Ind.		Y	Y	Y
Gilchrist	Iowa		Y	Y	Y
Mesicek	Iowa		Y	Y	Y
Lindberg	Kansas		Y	Y	Y
Steele	Kansas		Y	Y	O
**Harvey	Ky.		NV	Y	Y
Morton	Ky.		Y	Y	Y
Falcon	La.		NV	NV	Y
Walker	La.		Y	N	Y
McGary	Maine		Y	Y	Y
Doyle	Md.		Y	Y	Y
Kuker-Kihl	Md.		Y	Y	Y
Dunn	Mass.		Y	Y	Y
Johnson	Mass.		Y	Y	Y
LaPlante	Mass.		Y	N	Y
Todd	Mass.		Y	Y	Y
Brown	Mich.		Y	Y	Y
Davenport	Mich.		Y	Y	Y
Smith	Mich.		Y	Y	Y
Speicher	Mich.		Y	Y	Y
Zook	Mich.		Y	N	Y
Bauermeister	Minn.		Y	Y	Y
Etter	Minn.		Y	Y	Y
Thomas	Minn.		Y	Y	Y
Bradley	Miss.		Y	Y	Y
Austin	Mo.		Y	Y	Y
Berg	Mont.		Y	N	O
*Feaver	Mont.		Y	Y	Y
Kaldahl	Nebr.		Y	Y	Y
Anderson	Nev.		Y	Y	Y
Sargent	N.H.		NV	NV	Y
Goldman	N.J.		Y	Y	Y
Johnson	N.J.		Y	Y	Y
Moore	N.J.		Y	Y	Y

NAME	STATE	Roll Call #	1	2	3
Parish	N.J.		Y	Y	Y
Walters	N.J.		Y	Y	Y
Eachus	N. Mex.		Y	Y	Y
Cleveland	N.Y.		Y	Y	Y
McKenzie	N.Y.		Y	Y	Y
**Cummings	N.C.		NV	Y	Y
Rader	N.C.		Y	Y	Y
Wilson	N.C.		Y	Y	Y
Gallagher	N. Dak.		Y	Y	Y
Abel	Ohio		Y	Y	Y
Dorsey	Ohio		O	O	Y
Rudd	Ohio		Y	Y	Y
Savage	Ohio		Y	Y	Y
Black	Okla.		Y	Y	Y
Jewell	Okla.		Y	Y	Y
Cornell	Ore.		Y	Y	Y
Lee	Ore.		Y	Y	Y
Robles	Overseas		Y	Y	Y
Halas	Pa.		Y	Y	Y
Huntley	Pa.		Y	Y	Y
Mechlowitz	Pa.		Y	Y	Y
Mitchell	Pa.		O	O	Y
Wyland	Pa.		Y	Y	Y
del Valle	P.R.		O	O	O
Mello	R.I.		Y	Y	Y
Kanapaux	S.C.		Y	Y	Y
**Horgen	S. Dak.		NV	Y	Y
Akers	Tenn.		Y	Y	Y
Logan	Tenn.		Y	Y	Y
Martin	Tenn.		Y	Y	Y
Harrell	Texas		Y	Y	Y
Hilger	Texas		Y	Y	Y
**Scott	Texas		Y	Y	NV
Stacey	Texas		Y	Y	Y
Peterson	Utah		Y	Y	Y
Scott	Vt.		Y	Y	Y
Gant	Va.		Y	Y	Y
Mika	Va.		NV	Y	Y
Nelson	Va.		O	O	Y

NAME	STATE	Roll Call #	1	2	3
Amos	Wash.		NV	NV	Y
Bauer	Wash.		NV	NV	Y
Horne	Wash.		NV	NV	Y
Davis	W. Va.		Y	Y	Y
Carlin	Wisc.		Y	Y	Y
Lewandowski	Wisc.		Y	N	Y
Schleife	Wisc.		Y	Y	Y
Anderson	Wyo.		Y	Y	Y
Bartelheim	SNEA		Y	Y	
Bernat	SNEA				Y
Rivera	SNEA		Y	Y	Y
Chavis	At Large		Y	Y	Y
Rountree	At Large		Y	Y	Y
Sproul	At Large		Y	Y	Y
Treibley	At Large		NV	NV	Y
Burse	Ex. Com.		Y	Y	Y
Foglia	Ex. Com.		Y	Y	Y
Fujimori	Ex. Com.		Y	Y	Y
Lewis	Ex. Com.		Y	Y	Y
Mack	Ex. Com.		Y	Y	Y
Obermeyer	Ex. Com.		Y	Y	Y
Futrell	Ex. Com.		Y	Y	Y
Freitag	Ex. Com.		Y	Y	Y
McGuire	Ex. Com.		Y	Y	Y

**Wayne Harvey (Ky.) wishes it known that if he had been present he would have voted YES on #1. Gordon K. Horgen (S. Dak.) reports he was carrying out other NEA business when vote #1 was taken but would have voted in favor. Frances M. Cummings (N.C.) also would have voted YES on #1 but was in consultation with NEA staff at the time of the roll call. Robert F. Chase (Conn.) was out of the room on Association business when vote #3 was taken but would have voted YES. Dora H. Scott (Texas) also would have voted YES on #3 but was meeting with NEA staff on Association business at the time of the roll call.

Letters



Gifted Pushouts?

In the March 1983 "Debate" the proposition was: "Is lack of special treatment pushing gifted public school students into private schools?"

Possibly the answer is found in the quality of the writing contained in the pro and con statements. Ms. Pinckney, a teacher from Georgia, defended the proposition in clear, simple, direct language. New Jersey teacher Joan Moss dissented in a piece larded with jargon and pedagogy. Just think of referring to a gifted and talented human as a G/T.

If I were a G/T, I'd run to the private school.

Frederic B. Viaux
Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts

McGuire on P.L. 94-142

President McGuire's "Viewpoint" on P.L. 94-142 (March 1983) was compassionate, accurate, and well written.

NEA Today is always on top of the educational world, and I hope it continues.

Otto H. Spilker
Cullowhee, North Carolina

Football Overemphasized?

I read with interest the debate on sports vs. academics (Jan.-Feb. 1983).

At our high school, football is the most important class we have. It is the only class that has six teachers in it at the same time.

We have many excellent teachers at our school, two of whom come to mind. One has a B.S., the other a Ph.D. Both have essentially the same years of experience, but one receives some \$4,600 more in annual salary.

It just happens that this is the one with the B.S. degree who coaches.

Eugene Schoenhals
Panhandle, Texas

Unfinished Lunches

As a veteran of 7th and 8th grade lunch duty I'm not so sure that raising the price of school lunches is so bad ("Trends," Jan.-Feb. 1983). I know this goes against NEA doctrine, but I've seen too many unfinished lunches thrown in the trash. When surplus apples and raisins were given away they usually served as ammunition for food fights.

Generally I find NEA Today well written and informative, but I would like to see a little more balance in future articles.

Ann Marie Lippert
Westerly, Rhode Island

I invite you to come and visit our school cafeteria during lunch time any day. Stand by the waste barrel with me, where over 60 percent of school lunches are discarded! You would be sick and angry, as I am. What a waste—of time, effort, and funds! I don't think you'd ever bewail the cutback in the lunch program budget [again].

As a health professional I would see a brown bag lunch, from home, as equally nutritious—if not more so. A milk and juice bar would serve as a supplement. In time, waste would diminish and in this way, parents would be encouraged to practice more personal concern and accountability for their child's nutrition.

What's cheaper and more nourishing than a peanut butter and jelly sandwich a couple of times a week?

V. Brown
Newark, New Jersey

Better Off?

In your "midterm assessment" of the Reagan presidency (Jan.-Feb. 1983) you asked, "Are we better off now than we were two years ago?" Virtually every classroom teacher and certainly every retired teacher is better off today than they were under the poor leadership of Carter and the liberal Democratic Congress and their double-digit inflation.

The simple reason teachers are better off is... an inflation rate less than 5 percent. Get your head out of the sand and at least admit the President has done some of the things that he promised.

Walter E. Schlemmer
Royal, Arkansas

More Data Needed

What are the average teaching loads, salaries, class sizes, etc., state by state across the country? What subjects are being taught at the various grade levels? How are various local school districts financed?

Where can we find these statistics? And what do my fellow educators feel about these and other basic concerns? What are these other concerns?

It seems direct questionnaires, perhaps via NEA Today, would help. The costs of collating and publishing such data would be dues money well spent—perhaps the best use possible.

Larry Sarner
Tunnelton, West Virginia

Ed. note: NEA's Research unit in Washington, D.C., is already collecting and publishing data on every aspect of American education from class sizes to salaries. This wealth of data—an indispensable resource for legislative lobbying and collective bargaining—is readily available to all state Associations via NEA's computer network.

The Political Arena

I am proud to be an educator and believe in the importance of trying to be professional at all times. I am happy that NEA has worked successfully to improve teacher rights and salaries.

I am gravely concerned, though, that NEA is abandoning a professional demeanor in the political arena. We can and must fight for our rights and those of our students, but we should not allow ourselves to become brutish and dehumanized in the process.

That is the real challenge... to remain professional educators.

Patrick K. Seltzer
Columbus, New Mexico

I wanted to commend the entire NEA staff for the new format of NEA Today and for the first annual edition of Today's Education. Today's Education will remain on my bookshelf as a resource for the entire year.

One more note: the inclusion of political information in no way reflects poorly on our profession. On the contrary; by becoming more adept at dealing with such issues we can better further quality education for all America's children. Keep us informed.

Marion Dexheimer
Buford, Georgia

'Cover to Cover'

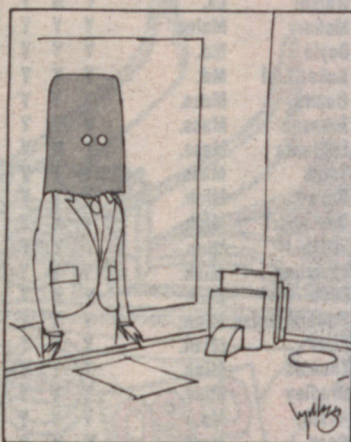
Like many teachers', my work load has increased so drastically that it was a great relief to be able to save some time by transferring my NEA newspaper straight from my mailbox to file #13.

Unfortunately, your past few issues have become so relevant I feel obligated to actually read each one from cover to cover. Keep up the good work. I'll find the time somehow.

Ernst Graw
Freer, Texas

As a former editor of house organs in Detroit and a writer for Boston newspapers, I recognize excellence when the print hits the paper.

Without question, your revised, modern format and comprehensive coverage are a hit. An Association pacesetter, NEA Today deserves



"I received a call 10 minutes ago, with my hair in curlers and no make-up, asking me to substitute for your regular teacher."

almost as much appreciation as its publisher!

James L. Hofford
Boston, Massachusetts

The Medicare Gap

I read with interest your [November 1982] article, "Will You Fall Through the Medicare Gap?" However, the most important possibility in health insurance for retirees was not covered.

That possibility is for the local Association to negotiate contract provisions for retired teachers to continue the same coverage they had as active teachers. This will be the best insurance they can purchase and will be especially important [for those teachers not covered] by Social Security.

The importance of retaining the active teacher's health plan in retirement, rather than converting to a Medicare supplement, is that less than half the doctors accept Medicare assignment.

Medicare's "reasonable charge" averages about 75 percent of the usual doctor's bill. Medicare plus a Medicare supplement policy will only be equal to the "reasonable charge." The patient may be billed for the other 25 percent of the doctor's fee...

NEA could benefit both retired and active teachers by advocating that local Associations work to achieve insurance benefits for retired teachers.

James E. Kelso
Sacramento, California

'Majority' Views?

It is refreshing and gratifying to read so many letters in conflict with the positions taken by NEA's "leaders."

However, I feel these letters of opposition are only the tip of the iceberg, and if the truth were known, the leaders would fail to reflect the views of the majority of the membership.

Marshall Serbick
Berwyn, Illinois

'Embarrassing' Letters

Of course NEA members have divergent views. There are conservative and even ultraconservative teachers among our ranks. But must you print every reactionary letter you receive, just to exhibit the overall fairness of the NEA Today editorial staff?

Some of the letters, although comical, are professionally embarrassing. What about the overwhelming majority of the nation's teacher/members who agree with the policies, programs, and politics of NEA, most of the time? Must we waste our stamps in rebuttal?

Michael L. Pedersen
Pat Kelly-Pedersen
Lolo, Montana

Ed. note: We try to publish a representative sampling of the letters we receive every month—and we welcome rebuttals to the letters that do appear. If you're offended by a letter we print, please don't seethe. "Waste" that stamp! A good give-and-take on the issues is worth far more than 20 cents.

'Work for Change'

I want to take a minute to applaud the NEA's strong commitment to issues of public importance. Bland, inoffensive statements accomplish nothing. I would rather the NEA make what may be awful mistakes in positions, based on deep caring for kids and education, than to be afraid to care, afraid to stand up and be counted!

To those who disagree with the NEA's position I say, get involved. It is the members who care enough about education who create the time to get involved, who are chosen by their fellow teachers and who write the statements. If you want to see things changed, find the time, earn the support of your coworkers, and be a leader! The profession, and the kids, can use you.

The price of criticizing is to work for change. Too many teachers never pay that bill.

Beth E. Clemensen
Davenport, Iowa

Two Calls for Help

Despite an energetic drive to recruit supporters for Educators for Social Responsibility [an organization dedicated to ending the nuclear arms race through education], we have witnessed very negligible results.

We have plastered school and community college bulletin boards with meeting notices, spoken with teachers, sent letters to the editor, and gotten our aims on the agenda of a fair-sized secondary teachers' association.

In spite of this, we continue the struggle with a disheartening half handful of active supporters and have experienced literally zero growth since our initial meetings last fall.

[We are frustrated by] our too often cautious, conservative, fearful, lethargic, sheepish and short-sighted colleagues (traditionally preoccupied with numerous irrelevancies).

Any comments—particularly constructive approaches toward gaining teacher and possibly parent support—will be most welcome.

Leonard Burkhardt
Shasta High School
Redding, California

The Somonauk (Ill.) High School Alumni Association is interested in locating anyone who ever taught in Somonauk. We are trying to compile the history of the school and need to know of as many former teachers as possible.

If you taught in Somonauk or know someone who has, please let us hear from you.

Deborah Matthews
Somonauk H.S. Alumni Assn.
P.O. Box 100
Somonauk, Illinois 60552

What's your opinion? NEA members are cordially invited to use this page to exchange ideas with their 1.7 million colleagues around the nation. Correspondence should be addressed to "Letters," NEA Today, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

Debate



Joe Schuyler

YES

During my 12 years in food service in our school district, I've heard all the arguments for making junk food available in the schools.

Some say 'give kids freedom of choice.' Others argue that junk food isn't really so bad, and that students will find a way to buy it anyhow, so why not put it in the cafeteria and not force them out to buy it elsewhere?

I suppose some of these arguments make sense, but I'm not convinced. I think it's time to get the junk food out of school cafeterias and vending machines.

My primary concern—and the concern of other food service workers—is to provide each child with a well balanced, hot meal at an affordable price at lunch time.

I believe this concern is shared by teachers as well. And I'm sure parents would agree that when they hand out the lunch money at home, they want that money spent on a good meal and not on junk food.

For some children, having to choose spaghetti, a salad, bread and butter, and milk over cookies, chips, and ice cream is a hard decision to make. Unfortunately, most often the cookies, chips, and ice cream win out.

To me, selling junk food in the schools—especially from vending machines located in the cafeteria—takes away the whole concept of school lunch.

In their elementary years and on up through the grades, kids are taught that good nutrition means eating well balanced meals. That means one item from each of the four food groups.

When the children come to the cafeteria for lunch, choosing among several equally nutritious foods is all the choice they should have to make. Offering them the choice between a well balanced lunch and a cupcake, ice cream, and chips just isn't appropriate—any more than offering them a choice between math and physical education would be.

The availability of junk food in the cafeteria and in other places around the school is an open invitation to kids. It's like saying, "If you don't want what's on the menu today, it's OK to buy junk food instead."

Should schools ban 'junk food' from cafeterias and vending machines?

Julie Williams has worked in food service at Bethlehem Central School District in Delmar, New York, since 1970. She has held just about every type of cafeteria job—salad maker, cook, baker, dishwasher. She currently manages the middle school cafeteria and is lunch coordinator for the entire district.

Having junk food available also takes away from the sale of reimbursable lunches. Without that reimbursement from the state and federal governments, the school lunch program has a hard time keeping its operation in the black.

Selling junk food also adds short-term expense to the school lunch program. Although we sell these items to make a profit, that profit isn't always realized during the month in which the food was purchased and the bills for that food come due.

Having said all that, however, I also realize that the sale of junk food has had some positive effects in our school system.

Since we began making junk food available about two years ago, it's actually made money for our cafeteria operations. Junk food sales have generated money that was not there before.

Still, despite the financial pluses, I don't like the idea of junk food in our schools, if for no other reason than that the food is a temptation for kids who really need a hot nutritious meal.

For some, lunch may be the only good meal they get all day.

Bob Berndt, a 12-year veteran in the Hancock Place School District in St. Louis County, Missouri, teaches—or has taught—English, French, social studies, humanities, and journalism. He serves on the Missouri-NEA Board of Directors. Berndt consumed 24 ounces of Pepsi while writing this article.

Oh, goody! Another social problem for us to solve. Let's see. We try to make sure kids are properly immunized, show no symptoms of child abuse, get good meals, go to integrated schools, learn about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse, become educated about sex. . . .

Worthy goals all, no doubt. Now we want to try to change our students' eating habits. After that, we can ban certain kinds of footwear; then we can outlaw tight pants to protect our students from circulatory problems.

Aren't we satisfied with the onerous duties of patrolling potties, monitoring halls, counting lunch money, and supervising playgrounds? Do we really have to add calorie counting to our list?



Rich Wall

NO

It's no wonder we've been assailed from all sides. We have our collective nose in every social issue in the country.

Junk food is hardly a grassroots issue. In fact, my experience tells me that some of the most prolific consumers of junk food are teachers.

Never mind the pragmatic, if somewhat jaded, arguments that the so-called junk food provides revenue for slush funds—some of which are used for worthwhile purposes and not to redecorate principals' offices.

Never mind that sales supplement cafeteria revenues and so keep lunch prices down, especially in an era of declining government support.

Never mind that some cafeteria food is so bad that kids would rather go without than eat it, and junk food at least gets them through the day.

Never mind that kids will always find a way to get what they want—whether it's alcohol, drugs, or candy. We have enough trouble keeping the drugs and alcohol under control without trying to make sugar into a contraband item.

I don't mean to suggest that we ignore principles of good nutrition. But they're already in the curriculum. Let's keep our concerns about student nutrition in health and home economics classes.

All we can really do is give our kids sufficient information to make intelligent decisions. We can't *make* their decisions, nor should we.

The ravings of the Moral Majority, Phyllis Schlafly, and their clones notwithstanding, almost all of our kids have a parent or two around somewhere. We should leave a little something for them to do.

We don't have to take up every noble cause that comes along—at least organizationally. I have teacher friends who work with weight control groups, Big Brothers and Sisters, Red Cross, and a host of other worthwhile causes. I admire them. I contribute to their fundraisers. In fact, I bought a candy bar from one of them just last week.

As teachers, let's not volunteer to tackle another social problem—a relatively trivial one at that.



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